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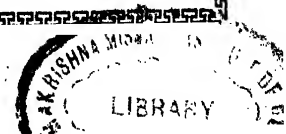


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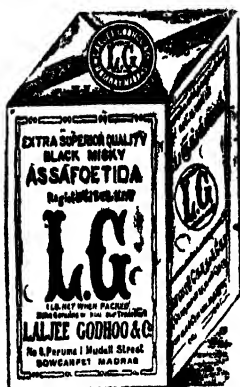
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PRAYER

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एकं ब्रह्मैवादितीयं समस्तं
सत्यं सत्यं नेतरच्चास्ति किञ्चित् ।
एको रूद्रो न द्वितीयोऽवतस्थे
तस्मादेकं त्वां प्रपद्ये महेशम् ॥
एकः कर्ता त्वं हि सर्वस्य शम्भो
नानारूपोऽप्येकरूपस्वरूपः ।
यत्तत् प्रत्यक् सर्वे एकोऽप्यनेक
स्तस्मान्नान्यै त्वां महेशं प्रपद्ये ॥

Oh Lord, Thou Terrible one, Thou art the sole Existence; Thou art second to none; Thou art the Brahman; Thou art the Universe; and verily nothing is but Thee; therefore, my Lord, do I take refuge in Thee.

Oh Lord, Thou Brahman, Thou Master of the world, Thou art changeless in the midst of changes; Thou art the one indwelling Spirit in all, Thou art the One in many. Therefore, my Lord, I seek shelter in Thee.

SKANDA-PURANAM.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

It is the 2nd of February, 1922. The Swami is the honoured guest of a devotee in Calcutta. In a room H. and D. are eagerly waiting for the Swami. The Swami comes in, takes his seat and asks D. good news, news particularly of the mind. The latter replies, he is doing well. The Swami rejoins :

Swami :—That is good. That is wanted. A pure, healthy mind is what is required most. Remain under the shelter of His lotus feet. He will do the needful ; you are only to keep your mind ever fixed on him. Give up all charms for the world. It is a very nasty place. Don't pay much heed to it ; but pay as much as is a bare necessity and no more, and the rest to God. I tell you, you are just the fit person. Try and you will succeed. ' Struggle and struggle—you must have to struggle hard.' Begin this moment ; no more delay, no more doubts, no more speculations. Oh, the joy of realisation, the satisfaction of it ! A bit of it, and ' that will be sufficient for you'. Strive on ; you must have to cross over the Mahamaya (Divine illusion) ; yes, in this very life you must go beyond it. Strive hard ; it is indeed a difficult task. Faith, unshakable faith is necessary. Without that you can not succeed. Be determined ; remove all doubts and then can you tear the veil of Maya and see God. Faith, you know, is the only resource, hence faith you must have by all means.

D. :—If doubt creeps in at times ?

Swami :—The fact is, you can not have firm faith until God-realisation ; It is possible only when you have the vision of God, when you have realised Him. Till then you can attain to the nearest approach of true faith and no farther. Whenever doubts disturb the even balance of the mind, hold fast to God and pray. If you can do so over and over again, your conviction will be

firm and invincible. And doubts, surely will they come, but drive them out in this wise. Think within yourself : ' God is, but because it is not to my lot that I cannot see Him. The moment His grace descends, the moment shall I be blessed by seeing Him.' Don't lose faith. Stick to him always, and under all circumstances.

This gross mind, it cannot comprehend God. God is beyond mind, He is far beyond intellect. The world that you see is within the domains of the mind ; the mind is its author, the mind has created it. Beyond it, the mind cannot go. But through Sadhana opens up a subtle mind, the mind of the spirit. That is already in you, but in the form of a 'germ.' In course of time, this 'germ' will 'develop' and unfold. The gross mind will lead you to the subtle. The subtle shines forth in the glory of its own self. It is at this stage that you can have the vision of finer truths. The world with all its multiplicities, will then lose all charms for you. It can delude you no more. Then will you pass your times, day and night, completely lost in the contemplation of God and His glory. The next stage is Samadhi. This Samadhi, you cannot describe. It is beyond the reach of the gross mind, and all language fails to explain it. It is beyond Asti and Nasti (human calculation), beyond pleasure and pain, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond light, beyond darkness, beyond all duality. Human language is too feeble to say what that blessed state is.

"The Vedas all deal with the three Gunas. Be thou free, O Arjuna, be thou free from the triad of the Gunas." In these words says Sri Krishna in the *Gita*. If you want God, you are to transcend the limits of the Gunas, (the three constituents of substance—Tamas, Rajas and Sattva—as opposed to quality or attribute, as the Vedanta expounds). Disputes and dissensions, wars and feuds, malice and jealousy, egotism and pride, these are the attributes of Tamas. And Rajas goads man to

activity, and creates desire for name and fame. Do you know what it is like? A man of Rajas meditates for half an hour at best, and then looks around if it has attracted the notice of others. If it does not, his meditation, he thinks, is all in vain; this half an hour's meditation! He is a beggar to popular applause. Then comes Sattva. The Vedas deal with these Gunas (perishable things); they cannot break off the limits. But you are to go beyond.

A little pause intervenes. The Swami, then, invites D. to ask any questions he likes, saying the Swami would answer them to his best, if he knows them. D. asks:

D.:—In this world certain works seem to us as duties; how are we to do these, Sir?

Swami:—‘This world is God’s. Nothing in it I have to call my own; He is getting His works done by me; verily nothing belongs to me.’—If you can do what you call your duties with this attitude, then they will do you no harm, your works will no longer bind you. ‘This thing belongs to me, that is mine;’—this attitude you must banish from your mind; and in its stead say: ‘Everything is God’s, even my very self; I am placed here by His sweet Will, and I shall be removed hence the moment He wills it.’ Let this be your principle. Do not identify yourself with the things of the world, yea, with none of them.

Do your duties in this light; and also do them thoroughly and well, so that people may not read your real motive and blame you for that. But in the heart of hearts know, earthly things you have none; to them let happen what may. God is the Doer and you the instrument. Through you He will get done what He likes to be done.

D.:—Maharaj, in my attempt to do work in this light, if at times I forget the true motive, if egotism asserts itself and if attachment prevails?

Swami:—‘Don’t depress yourself, no, never depress.’ If at times you forget your true motive, never mind. Begin once more with redoubled energy and see that it does not recur again. Doubts and confusions? Who can kill them before God-realisation. They will come and they will go. That is their nature. But don’t get dejected. Shake off despair, shake off disappointment, shake off doubts; no compromise. Infinite tenacity and infinite energy. ‘To do or die—let this be your motto.’ God, you must realise; this time, in this very life you must have to see Him. In vain your being, in vain your mind, in vain your life, everything in vain, if you cannot realise Him here in this very life. Boldly say: ‘What shall I do with the body, what is the use of the mind, if I cannot see God with them? What do I care if they perish? Let them be or go, but God I must see; by all means I must see Him.’

INDIA AND THE WORLD-PROBLEM

The *Vedanta Kesari* enters upon the 15th year of its existence with the dawn of this new year, and on this auspicious occasion we offer our salutations to the Lord whose unbounded grace has sustained us all through our arduous journey. We offer, as well, our heartfelt greetings to our readers and sympathisers, friends and admirers, who have evinced an unfailing interest in all our activities and encouraged us to carry the sacred message of the Vedanta to the doors of many, and to extend thereby the frontiers of the kingdom of spirituality established on the eternal verities of Religion. Our attempts have always been to recognise the truth of every religion and to cement the ties of human relations with the sublime teachings of the Vedanta, that awaken in every individual a consciousness of the potential divinity of man and seek to establish a spiritual fraternity on the noble idealism of Oneness in the diversity of beings. It has been our sacred mission, as well, to stem the tide of materialism that is sweeping over the land and is dividing mankind into petty hostile camps. We have spared no pains to demonstrate to the world at large the greatness of Spirit over matter and the special contribu-

tion of India towards the establishment of world-peace on the basis of the universalism of the Vedantic ideal. We, in our humble service, need the ungrudging support and co-operation of our readers and friends whose number, we are glad to note, is ever on the increase. We sincerely believe that the time is not far when, through a proper assimilation of the universal principles of the Vedanta, the entire outlook of international life would be changed, the clash of arms now ringing in the ears of the jaded humanity will be quashed into silence, and the star of peace shall reign supreme in the firmament of the world. We pray to the Lord that He may give us the necessary strength to render service to the humanity at large, irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality with an undying faith in His infinite grace.

The question of world-peace has been the table-talk of to-day; and the problem did never so prominently become a subject of international discussion and so seriously tax the best brains of the East and the West as it has done to-day. Instances are not wanting when in the past many great master-minds met together in pourparlers to find out a lasting panacea for all human ills and thereby to cry a permanent halt to the interminable cycle of worries and troubles. But the militaristic policy of the European nations, instead of minimising war, has only helped the disintegration of mankind into hostile groups to the utter negation of the homogeneity of international life. The modern political history of the world reveals almost the same state of things as obtained even several centuries back with only this difference that the imperialistic tendencies among the ruling races of to-day have all the more increased in proportion as the democratic principles have suffered a set-back in their mad pursuit after material gain. The Machiavellian philosophy of state-dynamics that fraud and force are the most convenient methods for the strangulation of weaker people was utilised by the ruling nations to their best advantage in the past as it is being done to-day. It is not therefore a matter of surprise that this subtle political philosophy has served only to keep the belligerent nations in a state of "suspended animation" during times of peace, and to call forth during times of war bloody scenes of violence and rapine amidst the pitiful cry of oppressed humanity.

It is now an undeniable fact of history that the attempts of the "peace-makers" of the West to establish peace on the quick

sand of militarism and on the unstable basis of the adjustment of political, economical, and territorial interests of nations have produced no appreciable results but have only broadened the way for the extension of their "sphere of influence" and political jobbery, to boot, and prepared fresh chains of slavery for helpless people. The Roman imperialism of yore, the 'benevolent' autocracy of Mediaeval Europe and Napoleonic regime of the 19th century sink into insignificance before the magnitude of political camouflage and duplicity resorted to in the arena of modern politics to determine the relation of international life. The last Armageddon of 1914 to which moth-like all the nations of the East and the West flung themselves, heedless of consequences, is nothing but a prelude to a mightier and graver political catastrophe that awaits them in the near future. It is, therefore, vain to expect these self-forgetful warring nations to run deep into the very root of the present chaotic state of things and to evolve a comprehensive scheme for ushering in an era of peace and order out of the present welter of strife and disorder.

But the world seems to have grown too sick of this orgy of bloodshed and internecine warfare. In spite of appalling craze for self-aggrandisement and political domination there has grown up a natural tendency to draw a final curtain over this tragic drama of international wars and political jugglery. The teeming millions are looking up to the East with all the intensity of soul for a healthy balm that shall assuage the unending worries and bitterness of life and sweeten the relation between man and man. Rank materialism is now stinking in the nostrils of many a weary soul. Even "modern" Christianity has miserably failed to rise above parochial patriotism or the banalities of Europeanism and proved its inefficiency to tackle the serious problems of the world. The Asiatics—the unwary victims of the deceptive snares of Occidental civilisation are showing unmistakable signs of awakening as well as a grim determination to cast off the veil of superstitious fear that had so long checked the all round growth of their individuality. A stirring is now manifest in every department of life. An irresistible tendency for intellectual freedom, social, and political emancipation from the octopus of Western culture marks the beginning of a new era in the annals of the East.

Of all the countries in Asia, India, though now politically effete and economically atrophied, has ever stood resplendent in

the forefront of nations with the message of love and spirituality in her gift inspite of her political vicissitudes. For the wreath of Indian life is strung not with the iron-thread of politics but with the golden string of spirituality—the matrix of its strength and inspiration. From time immemorial India has played the role of a world-teacher and has sent forth waves of spiritual ideas to mould the destinies of mankind. The bead-roll of Indian prophets and seers from remote antiquity up to the present day points to the same conclusion. The humanising teachings of these sages and prophets wrought phenomenal changes in the thought-world of humanity. The resplendent personality of Lord Buddha looms even now clear and distinct through the mists of centuries, and the world best knows how the tidal wave of Buddhism at one time broke down the artificial barriers and quenched the spiritual thirst of one-third of humanity in the remote past. An enlightened soul as he was, “his heart beat with each throb of all the hearts that ached known and unknown” and he embraced the suffering mankind with all the catholicity of a Saviour. He stood as an angel of love and freedom to work out the liberation of the sunken people. This is in fact one of the many instances of how India responded to the spiritual needs of men at different periods of her career. To day again in this age of cultural conflicts and rank materialism India has stepped out from her position of political seclusion to take up the role of a world-teacher to broaden and spiritualise the cribbed vision of man.

Militarism was never a determining factor in Indian life. The Indian culture with a spacious spiritual background has always toned down every form of militarism by its liberalising force, and never suffered ‘matter’ to predominate over ‘spirit’. To-day the world with its numerous sects and communities, different teachers and doctrines, has been transformed into a hopeless welter of chaos and disorder, and it is needless to point out that without a living and universal religion that can restore the missing string in the instrument of harmony and spiritualise the relation between man and man, the world would have no respite from worries and wars. The Western nations have almost exhausted the whole armoury of their cultural achievements, spiritual and secular, to solve the problem of world-peace, but they have been found sadly wanting in their efficacy. The wor. in hopeless confusion has turned to India—the light of

Asia—for an immediate solution of this complexity of life. The Vedanta, it must be admitted, is the only synthetic philosophy that possesses all the elements requisite for the happy adjustment of disturbed relations among men of different climes. In fact, it is Vedanta and Vedanta alone that can satisfactorily meet the demands of the age and promote a feeling of fellowship among the adherents of various religious systems of the world. What other religion but Hinduism has ever unlocked the secret of the Oneness of Spirit that dwells as a permanent link in and through the diverse manifestations of the cosmic universe? Vedanta—the crown of Hindu philosophy—is a bold challenge to the materialistic world and establishes the homogeneity of international life inspite of manifold differences in human activities. It breaks down the artificial barriers that have narrowed down the intellectual outlook of each race or nation and asserts with a triumphant note that until and unless the knowledge of the potential divinity of man and the oneness of human existence bursts upon the self-forgetful mankind and the transcendent idealism of Vedanta is accepted as the background of future activities in the scheme of individual or international life, no amount of political shibboleths shall ever establish peace in this world of unrest.

The responsibility of India was never so great as it is to day. The throbbing heart of Europe wants a life-giving, spiritual message from the East to counteract the baneful influence of materialism. It is indeed gratifying to note that at this psychological hour India has again undertaken to fulfil her noble mission—the mission of unlocking the treasures of her culture and bringing within the reach of every one, irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality, the sacred message of the East—the message of the spiritual oneness of humanity. The banner has already been planted in various centres of material culture and has commanded the spontaneous homage of many a noble soul. Our Vedantic view of life has been accepted in many quarters as the only basic principle to determine human relations. What is now needed is the immediate orientation of the Western psychology to the transcendent doctrines of the Vedanta philosophy. This radical change in the angle of vision in the light of this spiritual ideal is the sine qua non of the elimination of racial prejudices, political megalomania and the evolution of a spirit of hearty co-operation and brotherhood amongst all. It is, thus, Vedanta and Vedanta alone that shall

prove the absurdity of the pithy apothegm of the poet that "East is East, and West is West ; and never the twain shall meet." Let us hope that the voice of the East shall not go unheard and that the universalism of the Vedantic ideal shall usher in an era of peace unprecedented in the annals of mankind, and unite the various races with divergent proclivities and achievements on a platform of brotherhood, and put an end to the orgy of bloody struggles that have so long blackened the pages of history.

Om ! Shantih ! Shantih ! Shantih !

IMAGE-WORSHIP IN HINDUISM

(By *Swami Iswarananda*)

Blessed are those that can realize God by breaking images and blessed are those that realize Him by worshipping images. This was the thought that naturally arose in my mind when I heard that a learned Professor, a Hindu, gave a harangue on the evils of image-worship and called upon us all to throw away idols into the Arabian Sea and raze the temples to the ground. We are all Hindus and our religion being one of toleration and inclusion, we need not be ashamed of that. According to us any way, or any method, if it will help us on towards realizing God is true and valid. Therefore if it can be proved that a man can realize God by breaking images, may the Lord bless him and grant that he may have as many images as he likes to break.

Nothing is acceptable now-a-days without a scientific explanation. Therefore you have to invent some scientific superstitions, if you do not know anything better. It has been discovered to our cost that the Hindus put on sacred ashes as a cold-preventive and Chandanam or sandal paste for curing head-ache ! They make *prostration* before gods, because it is a good exercise and helps to develop the calf-muscles. Similarly the sacred Havan must have been kept up, they said, by the ancient Aryans for the purification of the atmosphere. It would not have surprised me in the least if they had also said that the Hindus chant the *Pranava* (Om), for clearing the throat of phlegm !

Aye, they discovered for us that an image made of clay could be knocked down by a rat ! Ignorance in children is excusable, but grown up men and learned professors ought to have known a bit of Indian History. They ought to have heard of the famous sacks of

the temple of Somnath and of the thousand and one other temples throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan by the Maham-edan invaders. They ought to have known that scarcely had the fire of a burning temple died out before twenty others raised their domes and towers in its neighbourhood. They ought to have known that we Hindus want no ghost to tell us that images made out of clay could be broken and powdered to dust. And yet the Hindu clings tenaciously to the image and the temple. What is the secret of it? What is the explanation? Let the wise ponder, before they rush to condemn.

An image is a poor little clay thing. It is powerless even to protect itself. Therefore, throw it away, says one section of the follower of the Vedas. Once a Christian Missionary was preaching to a Hindu crowd in the streets of Calcutta. When he reached the climax of his zeal he asked, if he gave a blow to their idol with his stick, what could it do. A boy in the audience sharply answered, 'If I abuse your God what can He do?' 'You would be punished,' said the preacher, 'when you die.' 'So my idol will punish you when you die,' retorted the Hindu.

Therefore by the same weapon with which you break the idol you break your God as well. What can the Brahman of the Vedas do to me if I abuse Him? What will become of me if I burn the Vedas themselves? We will have therefore to stop according to their logic all talk about God and religion. That is my reply to the argument from the historical 'rat incident.' The Hindu knew it very well. They saw to what absurd conclusions it would lead. And they also knew only too well the fallacy in the argument. The Hindu does not and cannot worship a God who would have stood up and fought a duel with a tiny imp of a rat, however much it might have satisfied the ideal of certain reform-sects. A God who could be teased and provoked to a duel by mischievous rats, might be very good for baby minds, but the Hindus know better. They would not care to notice such a God or his image.

Here arises a very pertinent question. God is eternal, without any form, omnipresent. Is it not then a blasphemy to think of Him possessing a form? Form is limitation and it cannot be eternal. Again God is spirit. He is pure *chit*, the very essence of consciousness and knowledge. Is it not then a sin to worship Him in dead matter, in the insentient *Jada*? Not at all, declares Vedanta; for there is in fact no such thing as Matter. The Vedas say: All that exists is the Lord and Lord alone. He is One without a second. There

is nothing here other than Himself. The wise who sees the omnipresent, supreme Atman as bodiless, within the bodies, as unchanging among changing things, goes beyond all sorrows. Therefore it is the greatest blasphemy to say that He does not exist in the image. What you call matter appears to be insentient and lifeless, because of our ignorance. Dr. J. C. Bose has proved by his experiments to the whole world that even minerals and metals have got life, though the manifestation of it to our perception is in the lowest degree. It has been shown that even they react to external stimuli, because they have got life. The more subtle the instrument of perception, the greater becomes the immanent divinity visible to us. Our inner instrument of perception is covered by *Tamas* and *Rajas* and so we do not see the divinity in the clay. When the mind becomes purified, the clay is no more clay. It is sentiency itself, it is *Akhanda Satchidananda*. A learned man once asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Sir, one may hold that God is with form. But surely He is not the earthen images that are worshipped." Sri Ramakrishna replied, "But my dear sir, why should you call it an earthen image. Surely the Image Divine is made of spirit." He who cannot see God in the clay image is therefore an atheist, says Vedanta. To say that the image is mere clay is rank materialism. It is against the teachings of the Vedas.

What then is the meaning of this image-worship? It is, says Bhagavan Ramanuja,—the concentrated effort of the mind to see the Reality, the Brahman in a thing which is taken by the ignorant for something else than Brahman. The symbol may be anything, a divine incarnation, a *Mukha purusha*, a Deva, any being or a tree, stone, or a stick. But the greater the manifestation of divinity that already exists in the *Pratika* or image, the greater the association of purity and holiness, love and mercy, freedom and the like with the *Pratika*, the fitter does it become an object for worship. That is why the divine incarnations and God-men come first in the scale of worshipful objects. A Buddha, a Krishna, a Christ, or a Ramakrishna Paramahansa has manifested attributes of divinity on a far greater scale than you and I could ever think of. In fact our idea of God is very little and it is through these great gigantic souls that we get a glimpse of the Reality that lies beyond. So also the gods of mythology. These gods are not mere imaginations, as many of us may believe; these are aspects and forms in which the Supreme Reality was vouchsafed to the devotee. In whatever form, in whatever aspect, the devotee wants to see God, in that form the all-merciful One, the all-knowing One, the all-loving One

reveals Himself for the sake of His devotee. How absurd it is to think that He cannot take a form at His will? And the testimony of hundreds of devotees and saints, not only of Hinduism but of other faiths, who had proved by their life that they had nothing to gain by speaking untruth, who had given up all desires for money, name, fame, and position—the testimony of these messengers of truthfulness goes to show that these forms of gods can be actually seen, by any one through sincere *Bhakti*. The gods of mythology therefore are forms in which the Lord revealed Himself to many a devotee and therefore they are some of the best *Pratikas* or images of God.

There is however one danger against which the worshipper should guard himself. If the ideal supreme Brahman is Himself dragged down by image-worship to the level of the Pratika, that is, if the supreme Reality, God, is taken to be of the size, shape, colour, and qualities of the Deva or the image, the worshipper gets entirely misled, as no Pratika can be the Atman of the worshipper. But where Brahman Himself is the object of worship and the Pratika stands only as a substitute or a suggestion thereof the worship is not only positively beneficial, but is absolutely necessary for all mankind, until the devotees have got beyond the preparatory state of mind regarding worship. Therefore when the Pratikas of any Devas or other beings are looked upon as Brahman and worshipped as such, the result obtained is the same as worshipping the Iswara. Thus it is that a Deva or a sage or a saint is idealised into Brahman and then worshipped. For is not everything Brahman when the name and form has been removed from it?—Says the Advaitin. Is not God the innermost self of every one?—Says the Vishistadvaitin. The very same man who kneels before the idol will tell you, "Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars. The very lightning cannot express Him, nor what we speak of as fire. Through Him do all shine."

The idea of a personal God, of an all-knowing acting Power from whom this universe comes into being, in whom it exists, who is the ruling power of this universe, who is all love, mercy, freedom, purity and blessing—such an idea of God has obtained in almost every religion except a few. With the exception of Buddhism and Jainism perhaps all the religions of the world have the idea of a God and with it comes the idea of worship and devotion. Though the Buddhists and Jains have not personal God yet they worship the founders of their religions almost in the same way as the worshippers of God worship their Deity. Through out the history of the world

we find that man is trying to grasp the abstract through forms or symbols. The Christian must have his church and the cross. He must look up to the sky in prayer. The Roman Catholic Church is full of images of the saints. The Protestants, when they pray have so many images in their minds. The Muhammadan, when he prays, imagines himself to be standing in the temple of Kaaba. He prays at the tombs of the saints. He does not believe in image-worship and yet Al Ghazzali in his book of worship gives the following injunction, "Know that when you stand for prayer, you stand before Allah, He being your examiner. Stand before Him as you stand before some earthly king, if you are unable to perceive the extent of His Majesty." Among the Jews idol-worship is condemned, but they had a temple, in which was kept a chest which they called an ark wherein the tables of their sacred laws were preserved, and above the chest stood two figures of angels with wings outstretched, between which the divine presence was supposed to manifest itself as a cloud. A section of the Hindu religious reformers, lured by the iconoclastic spirit of the West decry image-worship, but if the image is in sound, if the symbol is the Pranava (Om), then it is alright. What is the meaning of quarrel, then?

There is another peculiarity with Hinduism, which we must all take note of. The whole religion of the Hindus is centred in realization. Man is to become divine by realizing the Divine. Idols, temples, churches, books are only the supports, the help of his tottering spiritual childhood; it is the kindergarten of religion, but on and on he must progress. He should not stop anywhere. He must go beyond the necessity of images, beyond even the necessity of a God outside until he comes face to face with Reality, until he realizes God in his own self. So it is said—it is very good to be born in a church, but it is very bad to die in a church. It is good to have certain forms and rituals in the beginning, but surely every one in the long run should go beyond the bounds of forms and rituals. "External worship, material worship," say the Vedas, "is the lowest stage; struggling to rise high, mental prayer is the next stage; but the highest stage is when the Lord has been realized." Aye, ours the only scriptures in the world, which have again and again declared that man must go even beyond the scriptures, beyond the Vedas. It is said that the famous Trailanga Swami in his later days used to lie down with his feet resting on a Sivalingam which he used to worship in his earlier days, because to him everything was Brahman, his feet as well as the Sivalingam. And yet people would offer their worship with Ganges water and flower to that very same image and

those blessed feet. The Hindu, therefore, instinctively knows that the man of realization may give up all worship and that they would also worship the images in order to set an example to those who are struggling on the way. Therefore if anybody says that the images are to be kept for ever, he is certainly wrong.

Nor should any one who has passed beyond that stage call it an error. Is childhood or youth a mistake? Is manhood alone true and right? According to the Hindus, man does not rise "from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. To him all religions from the lowest fetichism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite, each conditioned by the circumstances of its birth and associations; each of these marks a stage of progress," and the lower stage is not to be condemned because you have passed beyond it. Remember that even the uncompromising Advaitin Bhagavan Sankar and Vidyanaraya Swami recommended image-worship and Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna after scaling the dizzy heights of realization did the same.

Nor is the use of images compulsory in Hinduism. The Hindu does not say that those who discard the help of images cannot realize God. Unity in variety is the plan of nature and the Hindu has recognised it. "The Hindus have discovered that the Absolute can only be realized or thought of or stated through the relative and that images, crosses and crescents are simply so many symbols, so many pegs to hang the spiritual idea upon." It is not that this help is necessary for every one, but it is so for many; and those who do not need it themselves have no right to say that it is wrong or unnecessary for any one. Idolatry in Hinduism, therefore, does not mean anything horrible.

SUPREME KNOWLEDGE AND THE MAN OF REALIZATION

(By. C. Leik)

When one no longer is satisfied with intellectual gymnastics, he strives for the spiritual and spiritual realisation, the ultimate goal of which is Self-Knowledge.

To the aspiring one there may be many teachers, even invisible ones, to lead him gradually on to higher and higher truths. With childlike faith in his Guru and ever conscious of his presence, loyal

and obedient, he waits for the teaching in patience and submission. In the higher spiritual states there is a law, that the faith of a trusting child can never be betrayed. And just as pupils at school are passing from standard to standard and teacher to teacher, till they are ripe for matriculation, so also in the spiritual unfoldment one may derive inspiration from the lives and teachings of men leading the spiritual life, till he feels an intense yearning to come face to face with Truth and then the Divine Mother Herself condescends to take him under Her direct guidance and tuition and sends to him his Guru, when the time is ripe, to lead him safely beyond the world of Maya to the realisation of Absolute Reality. Indeed, She Herself appears as his Guru through Her sons, who have attained Illumination. She, the All-powerful One knows best, what is beneficial to Her children and it depends upon Her grace, whether the more studious of Her children is to attain Self-Realisation by becoming merged in the Impersonal and Absolute. One moment She is the Universe and Intelligent Cosmic Energy and in another the Unconditioned and Absolute. The Divine Mother and the Impersonal are one and the same and cannot be separated one from the other.

Can the realisation of the most High be expressed in frail human language, when even all that an earthly mother feels for her child fails description? The Divine Mother knows the great temptation there lies in this Self-Realisation of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, of the Ocean, on the surface of which man is but a mere ripple and a world-teacher only a wave. Would there be any meaning for the return to the world of Illusion and superimposition, when Maya is perceived as a projection from That, the eternal Ocean of Divinity and Impersonality? So there was a promise given, to return unto Maya and work in Maya by showing his other selves the way out of Maya. And thus the return-journey, though repulsive, had to be made.

But what a change has taken place in that hour of liberation! No longer is he, the Witness, limited to Time, Space and the Law of Causation. Spiritual Wisdom and Divine Love have become one—Wisdom tempered by Love and the latter guided by the former. The subtle workings of Maya no longer can deceive him who has learnt to discriminate between the Real and the unreal. He has returned to love and serve and to radiate light and warmth, like a spiritual Sun, towards all beings, from the meanest to the highest, not wishing to know, who may be the recipients of those rays and whether they are conscious of the source of those rays.

The experience of Self-Realisation is never lost. He no longer needs to quote authorities for the support of his teachings, since this realisation has become his all-sufficing authority. To his inner gaze there is revealed the great Plan of the Divine Mother, where in the course of Kalpas and Maha-Kalpas one link fits exactly into another, making a harmonious Whole, each being playing its allotted part, all perfection and done in the best and only possible way.

Thus, viewing the Kaleidoscopic panorama of that great Play from the centre, with the right perspective and objectively, he no longer is distressed or elated by the pairs of opposites, knowing peace eternal to be beyond them both. Many deaths did he, the emancipated one, pass through in the fiery furnace of soul-agony and inward loneliness, ere that Peace, which passeth understanding, entered his being.

What are sex, family, race, nation, country, scriptures and religions to him, who now lives in the great Unity and the bodiless, timeless, form-less, and thought-less consciousness? He has risen to the state of spiritual sexlessness, in which the male and female principles of wisdom and love have become united in one and the same being and the whole humanity has become his family. How can he belong to that race, or be of such a nationality and creed, when only the 'genus homo' has a meaning to him? Scriptures, religions, and spiritual practices were a help on the way, by pointing to the supreme goal, whence he has voluntarily returned.

Knowing that the greatest workers are to be found in the darkest spheres of ignorance and spiritual darkness, where the less strong ones like plants reared in a hot house, tender and beautiful to gaze upon, would break down under the heavy burden of density, he has chosen to work there, where the need is greatest.

Does he shun woman, whom he has come to look upon as the representative of the Divine Mother on earth,—whose spiritually beautiful and noble life might have taught him true spiritual refinement? And was it not in woman, in whom first he realised his Divine Mother? And did she not reveal to him the divine mission of womanhood—she, to whom was entrusted the care of the life-to-be had to spiritualize herself, so as to raise, by her subtle influence, man from sensuality and conceited intellectuality to higher and higher spirituality?

The Divine Mother is always nearest to Her child and ever ready to respond to his call. There is none of that gulf or distance between them, which man, in his ignorance, has set up between himself and his fellow-beings. It was only the blind intellect that

created all these ideas of distinction, as of race, nation, creed and social position among the children of the one Divine Mother, who were born alike and visited by Death in the same way.

The urge of Evolution is to manifest in higher and higher forms. Are we so sure, that it has come to a stop with the human kingdom? Can the man of Self-Knowledge not view humanity objectively, as an ordinary man views the lower kingdoms? Ever is the Divine Mother teaching him to dwell in the Eternal and Unity underlying all life, ever revealing to him That, which is the all-embracing, all-penetrating and changeless in a world of constant change and diversity, that Oneness, in which all beings have become ourselves.

Now he understands the great sacrifice a world-teacher makes in taking human birth and why those saviours of mankind never put their living teachings on paper, leaving this for the disciples to do. When heart speaks to heart and soul communes with soul in the silent soul-language, what meaning would have there the medium of a dead letter, put on paper?

Oh, that compassion, when it was so easy, and one was so willing to let his life-blood ebb out to save even the meanest of creatures! Oh, that Love, when with one's whole being one could exclaim: 'Come all ye, that are troubled and heavy-laden and I will give ye rest!'

Are these spiritual experiences and realisations mere ideals, unattainable in this Kali-Yuga? Or perhaps only idle day-dreams of one, who fails to take facts in life as such and count with them? Or, may be, hallucinations of one, who has lost his mental equilibrium and is haunted by Utopian pictures, the magic conjuring of the subtle forces of Maya— all outcome of the unbalanced mind and a diseased brain? Verily, the world is ever ready to condemn, what it fails to understand.

But he, being in the world, is not of the world and waits in patience and childlike faith for his Divine Mother's call, when the mission She charged him with, has been fulfilled.

Thou art That;—the realisation of the Self as the Witness and Onlooker is always the eternal background and refuge, whenever diversity threatens to cover the Unity underlying all. Peace to all beings.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

As An Incarnation of the Indian Genius

(Continued from the April issue)

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

It is most fitting that I should sum up the life and work of Sri Ramakrishna in the words of the great Professor Max Muller who was a great lover of India and of the Indian genius. He says in his work on *The life and sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*:—"Ramakrishna was in no sense of the word an original thinker, the discoverer of a new idea or the propounder of any new view of the world. But he saw many things which others had not seen; he recognised the divine presence where it was least expected; he was a poet, an enthusiast, or if you like, a dreamer of dreams. But such dreams also have a right to exist, and have a claim on our attention and sympathy. Ramakrishna never composed a philosophical treatise; he simply poured out short sayings, and the people came to listen to them, whether the speaker was at the time in full possession of his faculties, or in a dream, or in a trance. From an ordinary Samadhi a man may recover as one recovers from a fainting fit, but the true Samadhi consists in losing oneself or finding oneself entirely in the Supreme Spirit. From this Samadhi there is no return because there is nothing left that can return. A few men only who have reached it are enabled to return from it by means of a small remnant of their Ego, and through the efficacy of their wish to become the instructors and saviours of mankind."

I shall now refer to a few of the great sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and shall show presently how his life, his personality, and his utterances have been among the finest incarnations of the Indian genius and are among the proudest possessions of the Indian spirit. I shall refer here only to the sayings relating to the soul, the *Sadhanas*, and the Supreme and to a few miscellaneous sayings and parables.

The soul

"As a lamp does not burn without oil, so a man cannot live without God."

"Like unto a miser that longeth for gold, let thy heart pant after Him."

"Woman and wealth have drowned the whole world in sin. Woman is disarmed when you view her as the manifestation of the Divine Mother. God cannot be seen so long as the love for woman and wealth is not extinguished."

"When does a man get his salvation? Then only when his egoism dies."

Sadhana

"Pure knowledge and pure love are both one and the same."

"He who does not find God within himself will never find Him outside of himself. But he who sees Him in the temple of his own soul sees Him also in the temple of the universe."

"When all personality is effaced, then one realises the knowledge of the Absolute in Samadhi."

"Anandam or enjoyment of perfect bliss within is one of the signs of God-vision."

"The realisation of God is of two kinds:—The one is the unification of the Jivatman and Paramatman; and the other is to see Him in his personal manifestation. The former is called Jnanam and the latter Bhakti."

"As a lamp brought into a room which has been in darkness for a thousand years, illumines it immediately, even so the light of Jnanam illumines the Jiva, and dispels his age-long ignorance."

"The Guru is a mediator. He brings man and God together even as a match-maker brings together the lover and the beloved."

"The hearing of the truth from the lips of the preceptor makes a greater impression on the mind than the mere reading of books; but the seeing makes the greatest impression."

"As the drowning man pants hard for breath, so must one's heart yearn after the Lord before one finds Him."

"Meditate on God either in an obscure corner, or in the solitude of forests, or within the silent sanctuary of your own heart."

"The easiest way of concentrating the mind is to fix it on the flame of a candle."

"If a man is convinced that the images of the gods and the goddesses he worships are indeed divine, he reaches divinity."

"He who has faith has all, and who lacks faith, lacks all."

"God is seen when the mind is perfectly tranquil."

"The two characteristics of Prema are, first, forgetfulness of the external world, and, second, forgetfulness of one's body."

"Visit not the miracle-mongers and the exhibition of occult powers. These men are stragglers from the path of Truth."

"Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God."

"Sandhya loses herself in Gayatri. Gayatri loses herself in Pranava. The Pranava in the end loses itself in Samadhi. So all Karma (Sandhya or the like) ultimately loses itself in Samadhi."

"His steps never falter who has taken refuge in Him."

"God is to be reached by child-like faith and gentleness."

"The child-moon is upon me; I behold the Lord within and without."

"So long as one does not become simple like a child, one does not get the divine illumination."

"Let the householder do his work with one hand, and touch the feet of the Lord with the other."

"Do not let water get into the boat; let the boat be in water."

God

"The same Being whom the Vedantists call Brahman is called Atman by the Yogis and Bhagavan by the Bhaktas."

"God is beyond mind and intellect so long as they are bound within relativity, but He manifests Himself to them when they are purified."

"God is in all men but all men are not in God, and that is why they suffer."

"Her devout sons only see Her by going near Her behind the screen of Maya."

"God with form is visible, yea, we can touch Him and talk to Him face to face as with our own dearest friend."

"God is formless and God is possessed of form too. And He is also that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone knows what all He is."

"The perfect man alone can see the Divine forms."

"God the absolute and the personal are one and the same."

"He is the Absolute and again His is the Lila. This Lila is of four kinds,—Iswara Lila, Deva Lila, Jagat Lila, and Nara Lila."

"Why does the God-lover find such ecstatic pleasure in addressing his God as Mother? Because the child is freer with the mother than with anybody else, and consequently to it She is dearer than all."

"Many have seen the king, but how very few can entertain him as a guest in their homes!"

Miscellaneous

"He who exerts to make himself free is the real preacher."

"Honour both spirit and form, the sentiment within as well as the symbol without."

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“ That knowledge which purifies the mind and heart is alone the true knowledge ; all else is only negation of knowledge.”

“ Do yourself what you wish others to do.”

“ What is the strength of a devotee ? He is a child of God, and tears are his greatest strength.”

“ The vain man of intellect is uselessly busy in finding out the ‘ why and wherefore ’ of creation, while the humble man of wisdom makes acquaintance with the Creator and enjoys supreme bliss in this world.”

“ The difference between the modern Brahmoism and Hinduism is like the difference between the single note of music and the whole music. The modern Brahmos are content with the single note of Brahman, while the Hindu religion is made up of several notes producing a sweet and melodious harmony.”

“ All are mad in this world ; some are mad after wealth, some after power, some after carnal appetites, some after God. If drowning is to be the fate of man, it is better to be drowned in an ocean of milk than in a pool of filth.”

“ It is the sign of knowledge that when it dawns full on a man, he become silent. Then the salt doll of “ I ” melts away into the Ocean becoming one with it,—there remains not even the slightest consciousness of separateness.”

I wonder if it is really necessary to say anything more on such a man and such a life—such a divine man and such a divine life. Is it necessary to moralise, to state the implications and applications, to add a human commentary to a text divine ? It does not look so at all. Left to myself, I would stop here. But as a slave of convention I proceed. The first reason for my affirmation that Sri Ramakrishna is one of the first incarnations of the Indian genius is his dower of great personal qualities. We find in him those sterling Indian qualities of *Santhi*, *Ahimsa*, *Viveka* and *Vairagya*, (peace, non-injury, discrimination, and dispassion), which are the pivotal and central elements of the Indian genius. We find in him the traits of insight and vision and faculty divine which are the inalienable possessions of the Indian spirit. We find in him the characteristics of serenity and sanity and synthesis and sweetness which are the *differentia* of the Indian outlook on life. He was no maker of sects. The malady of sect-formation is a recent malady in the history of India. But he fought resolutely against the insidious malady and won. He said :—
“ He, whose heart earnestly runs after the Deity, has no time to give for anything else. He who looks for fame and honour forms sects.” He

had the Divine Mother's command (*Adesha*) to utter Her to the world, and hence he spoke, and men came in thousands to hear him. He never sought fame and glory for himself. He says :—" At last I perceived the Mother's command, 'Remain at the threshold of relative consciousness for the sake of humanity'." He says again :—" Therefore I say, your lecturer must not be an ordinary man. He must be a person armed with credentials,—clothed with authority from the Most High. He must be one who has received his commission from Him."—(Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna I, 224). He once told Pandit Sisadhar Tarkachudamani :—" When I first heard of you I inquired if you were mere book-learned man or had discrimination and renunciation. A scholar without discrimination is a nonentity. There is no harm in playing the teacher's role if one has got the command of God. Such a preacher is invincible. One ray of light from the Goddess of Learning is sufficient to overthrow the brightest intellects. Moths come of themselves to the lighted lamp. They come in thousands and no one has to call them. Similarly the man who has received divine commandment need not invite people to his lectures, announcing the time. The magnet never invites a piece of iron to come to it. It is attracted automatically. Therefore I ask you if you have got the command." He said on another occasion :—" And what man can dare to procure freedom from the world for other men, unless he has found the Lord and received His ordination direct from Himself, and has been empowered with His power ?" It is this sense of absolute and measureless dependence on God as the inspirer, the comforter, the uplifter, and the bliss-giver of the human soul which is the greatest and most distinguishing trait of the Indian temperament and of the mind of Sri Ramakrishna who was one of the truest and finest incarnations of the Indian temperament. Sri Ramakrishna saw life steadily and saw it whole. His nature was one of singular serenity, balance, and calm equipoise. Such poise in the empyrean of the higher life is not a minimisation of human energy but rather a maximisation of human energy, like that of a *garuda* poised on outstretched wings and uttering Sri Krishna's name in longing and yearning melancholy. Sri Ramakrishna's life was true to the kindred points of heaven and home, as he belonged to the type of the wise who soar but never roam. He never fled away from earthly life nor did he shun heaven with loathing as some do today. His mind never made a hell of heaven but could make a heaven of earth and hell. He sublimated and adorned whatever he touched. Sex-life was irradiated with the life spiritual by him ; and his house-holder's life was full of renunciation and his *sannyasa* was full of detached attachment and love

and sympathy and toleration and charity. When such personal characteristics were resident in a body which was fair and which had a face which was calm and had eyes lit up with a spiritual light and a tongue every utterance of which was a benignant blessing and a merciful benediction, it is no wonder that his hearers were spell-bound and were under the fascination of a personality which was the embodiment of Indianness,—an incarnation of the soul of India.

Sri Ramakrishna was an embodiment of the soul of India as much by his teachings as by his life, though of course a man's life is of even greater importance and interest and value than his teachings. Let us take first of all his teachings in regard to individual life, family life, and social life, because even in regard to them he has given us valuable guidance and they show how he was Indian to the core of his being. When Indians are abused as being supine and fatalistic, we may well remember his advice: "So raise the hood and hiss but don't bite. There is no harm in hissing at bad men, your enemies. Keep them off by showing that you are ready to give tit for tat—that you know how to resist evil. Only one must take care not to pour one's venom into the blood of one's enemy. *Resist not evil by doing evil in return. All that you may do is to make a show of resistance with a view to self-defence.*"—(Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Vol. I, page 50). He said on another occasion: "Do not bite like the serpent, but hiss like the serpent. Make thyself feared and respected. Do not injure any one, but be not injured by others." He taught how passive resistance to evil and active assistance of good should go together. It is our duty to help our fellowmen in every way. *Paropakara* (good to others) is the essence of all the books on 'morality and religion.' *Parapidana* (evil to others) is the greatest sin against God. At the same time he showed how we must not allow philanthropy to become a fetish and a craze and an obsession. He said: "First go through devotional practices and see God. Then it is that inspiration and powers will come down to you and you may talk of doing good."—(Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Vol. I, page 160). He said again: "First cultivate devotion. All other things—schools, dispensaries, etc., shall, if you like, be added into you. First devotion, then work. Work, apart from devotion or love of God, is helpless and cannot stand."—(Do—page 215). He said again in regard to action and inaction: "A man who has absolute purity of mind naturally goes beyond action. He cannot work even if he tries to, or, the Lord does not allow him to work. As when a young wife is going to be a mother, she is given less and less work to do, and when the child is born she gives up the household work altogether and is

engaged with the child alone. But the ordinary man must do his work unattached, depending on the Lord—like the maid-servant in a house who does everything for her master but knows in her heart that she has her home elsewhere. This is known as Karma-Yoga. One should as far as possible take the name of the Lord and meditate on Him, while discharging one's everyday duties in an unattached way";—(Life of Sri Ramakrishna, page 346). While he inveighed against *Kamini Kanchana* (lust and avarice), he was full of a holy reverence for womanhood and accorded a high place to family life as a step in the ascent of the soul. He said: "Let the house-holder do his work with one hand and touch the feet of the Lord with the other." P. C. Muzumdar says: "He has successfully escaped the evil of carnality which he dreaded. His mother to whom he prayed, that is the Goddess Kali, made him recognise every woman as her incarnation, so that he now honours each member of the other sex as his mother. He bows his head to the ground before women, and before little girls; he has insisted upon worshipping not a few of them as a son might worship his mother. The purity of his thoughts and relations towards women is most unique and instructive. It is the opposite of the European idea. It is an attitude essentially, traditionally, gloriously national. Yes, a Hindu *can* honour woman." In regard to family life Sri Ramakrishna said the words which are strangely reminiscent of the words of Kasyapa Prajapati in the ever-blessed *Srimad Bhagawatha*: "What will you gain by renouncing the world? The family life is like a fort. It is easier to fight the enemy from within the fort than outside. You will be in a position to renounce the world when you can bestow three-fourths of your mind on God but not before." Sri Ramakrishna had keen artistic tastes and his criticisms of works of art were sound and valuable, and he had a sweet and vibrant voice and sang religious songs in a way which brought tears to eyes and the vision of God into hearts. His talk was musical and was full of glowing imagery. As Emerson says well: "Only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be sweet and lyrical and universal as the rising of the wind..... When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love." Quite as valuable as his ideas in regard to individual life in the realms of everyday life and in regard to the life ideal in the realms of art, are his social ideas. He was once so fired by a desire to get rid of social pride and exclusiveness that he went to the hut of a Panchama and cleaned the dirtiest portion of it with his long tresses. In regard to the question of communal unity he has shown to us the only way by which real and lasting communal concord

could be attained and maintained. He realised in a reverent way the great truths of Islam and Christianity and Buddhism and practised the *Sadhanas* revealed in those religions and had the greatest and most reverent love for the founders of all the great religions of the world. It is only by means of true love born of true understanding that we can get nearear to each other's hearts and minds and souls and realise the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In the modern age humanity is trying to realise the brotherhood of Man without trying to realise the fatherhood of God. This is like trying to build a building downwards beginning with the upper storey and working down to the basement, and is foredoomed to failure. Sri Ramakrishna was himself the best proof of the inherent and inalienable unity of feeling between the Brahmin and the non-brahmin sections of the Hindu community. He had both Brahmins and Non-Brahmins among his disciples and loved them with an equal love and uplifted both with an equal affection. Nay, his most favourite disciple on whom he lavished all the rich and divine wealth of his pure and purifying affection was a member of the great non-brahmin community—Narendra Nath who became afterwards the great Swami Vivekananda.

(To be continued.)

CHINA'S DEBT TO BUDDHIST INDIA

*By Prof. Liang Chi Chao**

China's Classical Scholar

India is China's nearest and dearest brother. To say that the country of India is our brother is not a mere matter of courtesy to India. It has its foundation in history. In ancient times China did not enjoy that facility of communication which was the privilege of the races bordering the Mediterranean Sea. We suffered from the disadvantages of being shut up in one corner of eastern Asia without any means of communication with other great races and cultures. The islands in the eastern and southern oceans were populated by savages. America, on the far side of the Pacific, gave no sign of civilization. Beyond our western and northern frontiers there were

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those barbarous and ferocious races whose business it ever was to threaten and devastate, but never to help us.

It is well for us to remember that this little privilege of culture which we possess today has been handed down to us by our ancestors, who labored long within secluded boundaries, unaided and single-handed. It is also due to this seclusion of its environment that our culture gives the impression of being monotonous and conservative to an extraordinary degree.

But across our south western boundary there was a great and cultured country, India. Both in character and geography, India and China are like twin brothers. Before most of the civilized races became active, we two brothers had already begun to study the great problems which concern the whole of mankind. We had already accomplished much in the interests of humanity. India was ahead of us and we, the little brother, followed behind. But nature had not been kind. She had placed between us a vast area of unfeeling desert and two great ranges of cruel snow peaks, which separated us for thousands of years. It was not till two thousand years ago that we were given gradually to know that we had a very good elder brother on the earth. When did these two great countries begin to communicate with each other ?

According to Indian history, King Asoka sent a number of missionaries to propagate Buddhist ideas. Probably some of them has travelled as far as China. Our own tradition says that in the time of the famous Chin Sze Huang (who built the great Wall) there were already more than ten Hindus, who had been to Chang-an and who were imprisoned and killed by him. Asoka and Chin Sze Huang were contemporaries and therefore this might have been true. But we need not worry over half fairy tales.

What we as historians are able to vouch for is that the first communication between us as brothers occurred in the first century of the era of Christ. From the tenth year of Han Yung Tsin to the fifth year of Tang Chen Yuan (67—789 A. D.), roughly during eight hundred years, the Hindu Scholars who came to China numbered twenty-four, to which may be added thirteen from Kashmir (which in Tang times was not recognized as part of India), thus making thirty-seven in all, not counting those who came from other countries on the eastern and western side of Chung Lin (Turkestan). Our scholars who went to India to study during the period from the western Tsin to the Tang dynasties (265—790 A. D.) numbered one hundred and eighty-seven, the names of one hundred and five of whom we can ascertain. Among the most famous from India were

Tamolosa (Dharma-raksha), Chu Shien (Buddha-bhadra), and Chen Ti (Jina-chandra) and from China, Fa Hien, Yuan Chuang and I-Tsing.

During the period of seven or eight hundred years, we lived like affectionate brothers, loving and respecting one another. And now we are told that, within recent years, we have at last come into contact with civilized ! races. Why have they come to us? They have come coveting our land and our wealth ; they have offered us as presents cannon balls dyed in human blood ; their factories manufacture goods and machines which daily deprive our people of their crafts. But we two brothers were not like that in the days gone by. We were both devoted to the cause of the universal truth, we set out to fulfil the destiny of mankind, we felt the necessity for co operation. We Chinese specially felt the need for leadership and direction from our elder brothers, the people of India. Neither of us was stained in the least by any motive of self interest—of that we had none.

During the period when we were most close and affectionate to each other, it is a pity that this little brother had no special gift to offer its elder brother, whilst our elder brother had given to us gifts of singular and precious worth, which we can never forget. Now what have we so received ?

India taught us to embrace the idea of absolute freedom—that fundamental freedom of mind which enables us to shake off all the fetters of past traditions and habits as well as the present customs of a particular age,—that spiritual freedom which casts off the enslaving forces of material existence. It was not merely that negative aspect of freedom, which consists in ridding ourselves of outward oppression and slavery, but that emancipation of the individual from his own self, through which men attain great liberation, great ease and great fearlessness.

India also taught us the idea of absolute love, that pure love towards all living beings which eliminates all obsessions of jealousy, anger, impatience and disgust, which expresses itself in deep pity and sympathy for the foolish, the wicked and the sinful,—that absolute love which recognizes the inseparability between all beings, 'The equality of friend and enemy,' The oneness of myself and all things.'

But our elder brother had still something more to give. He brought us invaluable assistance in the field of literature and art.

Of minor gifts, I will enumerate only the following:—

Music—This came indirectly through Si Yu. The most popular tunes were Kan Chou, I-Chou and Liang Chou, all names of districts

in the Siu Chang and Kan Su provinces. But at that time these provinces were almost wholly under the influence of India. But from what is recorded in the history of Tang and the Book of Music, as well as in the appreciations of music found in our general literature, we can be certain that that music must have been beautiful and exquisite. The cause of such excellence is probably due to the union of Chinese and Indian modes.

Architecture—That China has been influenced by India in her architecture is an obvious fact. We have still standing a number of ruins which tell us of the glory of those olden days. The pagoda is purely Indian in origin; we never had anything like it before the days of Indian influence.

Painting—The paintings of the most ancient period of our history have disappeared. Only from the stone tablets and stone inscriptions, such as the famous Han paintings in Wu Liang Tsze and Joh Siang Shien, do we obtain a glimpse of the fine simplicity of style in the paintings of that period. The most renowned painters in our early history were Kuo Tan Wei and Kuo Hu To. They were famous for their paintings of the Buddha. It seems obvious that from the East Chin Dynasty to that of Tang there was continuous communication between India and China, and this, with its introduction of numerous Indian pictures, had a shaping influence upon Chinese art; in fact we might go further and say that we probably owe the very foundation of our Chinese painting to Indian influence. A great school continued to flourish till the North Sung Dynasty, when it was superseded by the artists of our Royal Academy. It is still regarded as embodying the classical style of Chinese painting.

Sculpture—In olden times we had engravings upon stone, but never, I think, sculpture in three dimensions before the introduction of Buddhism. But the greatest treasure we have is the group of figures at Yung Kuang, Ta Tung and Shensi, large and small, not less than a thousand in number. It is said that the style is of Gandhara in Afghanistan, the result of the meeting between the Greek and the Indian cultures. This is indeed a priceless possession of which, if it had not been for our elder brother, we should have been deprived. Incidentally, we might also mention the art of the *Kakemono*, whose origin we also owe to India. In fact in the inventory of Yuen Tsang there is a record of a number of *Kakemono*, which he brought back with him from India.

Drama—We can trace the art of drama back to the play of Fish and Dragon, which was probably a species of magic or

trickery, rather than drama in the modern sense. The earliest operatic play we know of was called Pu Tou. Modern research has shown that it was introduced from a country called Pato near Southern India, some ten thousand miles from Ta Tung.

Poetry and Fiction—To say that India influenced us even in poetry and fiction would perhaps seem astonishing. But we have reason to believe that the celebrated translation of the two great books, *Fun Pen Shen Tsai* (the life of Sakyamuni by Ashvaghosa) and *Ta Shen Chung Yen Tsin* (Mohayana Sutra), by the great Indian poet Ma Ming (Indian name unknown), did exert a decided influence upon our literature. The vast imagination and rich emotional appeal of Hindu literature opened new vistas for the Chinese poets.

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Astronomy and Calendar—This special branch of science was early cultivated in China, but received further development in the Tang period, when the publication of Ju Tschu Sie showed the distinct influence of India.

Alphabet—With the introduction of Buddhism and Sanskrit a number of Indian scholars attempted to invent an alphabetical system to solve our difficulties.

Literary style—Ancient Chinese written books do not show sufficient effort at organization and therefore lack clarity of presentation. With the coming in of Buddhist classics, it began to be more systematic and consequently more lucid and logical in the exposition of ideas. Indian Logic (*Hetuvidya*) and Methodology opened a new era in China in the art of writing.

Educational Method—Exactly how education was conducted in ancient China no one is able to say, but we are quite certain that Confucius and Mencius did not resort to the method of addressing large audiences for the propagation of their teachings, and it is quite likely, therefore, that the system of formal lecturing, with which we are so familiar to-day, came from India. Further more the academies which flourished since the Tang dynasty cannot be other than Buddhist in origin.

Social Organization—The unit of Chinese society is the family. The different forms of social organization are only the family in its various modifications. Since Buddhism became popular in China, public bodies with religious and scholarly purposes, independent of the family, began to appear.

Indian thought has been entirely assimilated into our world of experience and has become an inalienable part of our consciousness

It has helped us to develop our faculties and has enabled us to achieve notable results in various fields of literary and artistic endeavour. Even if we confine our case to Buddhism itself, we find that we have made some worthy contributions to its many metaphysical systems, forming ever new schools of thought upon the foundation of the old, through the energy and application of men like Yuan Chuang ; so that we may take just pride in saying that Buddhism has become as distinctly Chinese as it is Indian.

We have unfortunately been separated from one another now for at least one thousand years and have each pursued our respective lines of development. We have had calamities during these years of separation. What have we not experienced? We have been threatened, mocked, trampled upon and have suffered all possible mortifications, so much so indeed that not only have we been looked upon with contemptuous eyes, but we ourselves have begun to lose our sense of self-respect.

But we have faith in the imperishability of human endeavour, and the seeds we have sown, in spite of the many vicissitudes and inclemencies which we are passing through, will eventually bring us a harvest in the fullness of time. Do not we find an inspiring symbol in the ancient trees of the sacred wood round Confucius' tomb, reputed to have been planted by himself and his chief disciples, which though shrunk with senility and almost in a petrified state are yet capable of manifesting their hidden vitality by shooting forth new branches of tender green, when the earth is awakened to the call of Spring? Both the civilizations represented by India and China are hoary with ancient traditions, and yet I feel that there is in them the vigor of eternal youth, which shows itself to day in India in the two great personalities of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

After a thousand years of separation during which period, however, we two continued to cherish thoughts of love for each other, this elder brother of ours has once more come to us animated with fraternal sentiments. Both of us bear lines of sorrow on our faces, our hair is grey with age, we stare with a blank and vacant look as if we are just awakened from a dream; but, as we gaze on each other, what recollections and fond memories of our early youth rise in our mind,—of those days when we shared our joys and sorrows together! Now that we have once more the happiness of embracing each other we shall not allow ourselves to be separated again.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IS JESUS THE ONLY SAVIOUR ?

In his 'The ever lasting Man' Mr. Chesterton, that brilliant writer and critic of England shows his utter ignorance of the great Indian religions. We cannot understand what made this author ignore the religion of the Hindu when he wanted to place Christianity as the only religion which was blessed with the personality of God in human shape. He tells us in his interesting book that no religion of the world has declared in clear terms this Avatarhood of God and *the Bible* as the only book where we hear 'the loud assertion that this mysterious maker has visited his world in person.' 'It declares,' says the writer, 'that really and even recently, or right in the middle of historic times, there did walk into the world this original invisible being ; about whom the thinkers make theories and the mythologists hand down myths ; the man who made the world. That such a higher personality exists behind all things had indeed always been implied by all the best thinkers, as well as by all the most beautiful legends. But nothing of this sort had ever been implied in any of them. It is simply false to say that the other sages and heroes had claimed to be that Mysterious Master and Maker of whom the world had dreamed and disputed. Not one of them had even claimed to be anything of the sort. The most that any religious prophet had said was that he was the true servant of such a being." "The most that any primitive myth has ever suggested was that the creator was present at the creation. But that the creator was present at scenes a little subsequent to the supper parties of Horace and talked with tax-collectors and Government officials in the detailed life of the Roman Empire and that the fact continued to be firmly asserted by the whole of that great civilization for more than a thousand years—that is something utterly unlike anything else in nature. It is the one great startling statement that man has made since he spoke his first articulate word, instead of barking like a dog. Its unique character can be used as an argument against it as well as for it. It would be easy to concentrate on it as a case of isolated insanity: but it makes nothing but dust and nonsense of comparative religion." We do not question the historicity of Christ though learned writers have doubted whether a person like Jesus lived at all. Erudite and sober-minded scholars have contended that the Jesus of *the Gospels* never lived at all, and 'that the story of the founder of Christianity is a curiously composite story of several Jewish rebels

against Rome, plus myths and pious fictions based on Old Testament predictions of a Messiah.' Renan that great French scholar, that worshipper of the good and the beautiful, declared his difficulty in arriving at so much as one page about the personage who was called Jesus which another careful student of the Bible asserted recently 'As a historical personage Jesus is unknown' and that 'in the last analysis, Jesus is derived from an induction'! We mention these only to remind that this man of letters with his sheer brilliance of diction and the scintillant glitter of his phrasing has vainly tried to carry convictions to his readers and that his pooh-poohing of the student of comparative religion in his eagerness to place Christianity on the top of the pedestal is found wanting in force when weighed in the scale of cool and dispassionate reason.

This man who moved amongst the tax-collectors of Rome—his personality has been doubted. No wonder then the personality of a Buddha has been questioned. Still less wonder when the scholars questioned the realities of Rama and Krishna whom the Hindus declare sons of God as Jesus of Mr. Chesterton was.

Some of these great ones have been recognised by the people as prophets, others as messengers of God, and others as saviours of humanity, the Incarnations of God. In the scale of graded humanity they were called prophets, messengers or saviours and each fulfilled his mission by setting an example of purity, unselfishness and all-embracing love. Mr. Chesterton is prepared to recognize the prophets and messengers but not prepared to think or speak of religions which recognise the Incarnations of God, the saviours of the world. To him Christ only spoke to the world that he and his Father were one and he that hath seen the son hath also seen the Father. The Hindu always believed in the Avataras or Incarnations of God and he placed them higher and nobler than all the teachers of the world. "They can transmit spirituality with a touch, even with a mere wish. The lowest and most degraded characters become in one second saints at their command. They are the Teachers of all Teachers, the highest manifestations of God through man. We cannot see God except through them. We cannot help worshipping them,"—so said the Swami Vivekananda regarding these God-manifestations in blood and flesh in this earth. Such a great Teacher was the Lord Krishna who proclaimed :—

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

'Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails I manifest Myself. To establish virtue, to destroy evil, to save the good I come from Yuga to Yuga.' And in his person he was God manifest in the flesh—said the Lord in no uncertain terms to his beloved disciple Arjuna in the *Gita*. Nor is Lord Krishna,—who declared that he and his Father are one. "Whom do you worship, whom do you meditate? The object of worship is here present in flesh and blood. Behold! I am That * *. The whole world comes from me";—said Lord Chaitanya to his beloved disciple Srivas when the Mussalman was ruling India and a Mussalman Governor was marching his regiments to suppress the Vaishnava Sankirtans; and in quite clear terms Chaitanya told his disciple that it was no other than he himself that was bringing the Mussalman array towards him. And the Lord Chaitanya met the Mussalman host with Sankirtan, confounded the Governor and made him and his whole family take to his doctrines, and the descendants of that family live to the present day. Only a generation back did Sri Ramakrishna pass away. It is in the memory of the living people amongst us,—men who are so-called educated in modern times;—the message of this great prophet of Dakshineswar who declared, "He who was Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Rama, Chaitanya, has now become Ramakrishna." This blindness of Mr. Chesterton to other living religions, is something astonishing to us—astonishing because he is an English man—and an Englishman of all Europeans having had opportunities to come in contact with this country. When so brilliant a genius as the writer of 'The Everlasting Man' could not or would not understand the religions other than his own, we can well understand the intolerant attitude of the millions of Christians in all parts of the world. Thanks to the study of comparative religion, this attitude of the frog in the well is slowly passing away. The world is becoming awake. And the disciples of Christ are coming to recognize the 'Forgotten Christs.' Said Rev. John Hayores Holmes in the Community Church in New York a few months back, "Jesus was not *the* Christ, but only one of the many Christs who have lived and died in history to bring a message of peace on earth, and good will to men." Universal love and universal tolerance—these have been the watchwords of all the saviours of the world whether he be Mob Tih—the Chinese, or Pharaoh Akhnaton—the Egyptian. It is gratifying to note that in spite of the Chestertons that come and pass away the world is slowly but surely coming to recognise this great message which Sri Ramakrishna in our own times gave to the world—this universal love and universal tolerance. The world therefore is bound to find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth, but in all the great Ones that have preceded him and all that are

yet to come, and the salutations of the world are bound to go to all these God-like men and women—whatever their race or clime or creed.

THE QURAN AND THE MUSSALMANS

"Islam means peace"; "Islam means obedience to divine Commandments, love and affection for the human race,"; "He is a Muslim, from whose hand and tongue no one suffers"; "Do you wish to love God? Then love his creatures"; "The Muslims believe that every religion before Islam was, in its pristine purity, Islam—the religion of Divine Commandments and human obedience! and if the purity of their teachings suffered from human interpolations, it should not allow us to speak evil of those religions and their teachers, because those teachers were the true Messengers of Allah, and were entitled to our respect and reverence"; "The Quran clearly enjoins upon Muslims to police all houses of worship * *. Abu Bakar, the first Caliph, ordered that the soldiers should not disturb non-Muslims in their worship, and should pass by their places of worship without any noise"; "To pass one night in contemplation for the benefit of the human race was more meritorious than prayers and devotions of many a night"; "Man was not born in sin, but was Muslim by birth, namely, capable of following the law, no matter whether he was born in a Muslim or a non-Muslim house"; "Animal sacrifice was a lesson for self-sacrifice in the way of the Lord"; "None will carry the burden of others; every one has to bear his own cross and will reap as he will sow"; "Poverty was not a sin but the pride of the prophets"; women "possessed soul like man"; "Verily, Allah orders you to be just—take your dues and let others have their dues—He orders you to be beneficent—help even those who have no claim upon your help; and lastly, He wants you to treat others as you treat your own family folk"; "The object of marriage in Islam is not satiation of lust and flesh"; "All creatures are God's and he is dearest to God who is more energetic in His service"; "Be equitable and just and let not your inimical relations to others allow you to do injustice to them"; "And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance." We have taken these quotations from the Presidential address of The Rt. Hon. Lord Headley—the English Mussalman who came to India in December last to preside over the All-India Tubligh Conference which held its sessions at Delhi. Here we have the soul of Islam. When we read the essence of Islam we find that real Islam always stood for union and harmony rather than for separation and dissension. "Allah o Akbar," "God is great" is the foundation and corner-stone of that religion. It is a perfect equalizer of men. It is a religion of compassion,

Withal that, in India Islam has been looked upon with terror and not without reason: for the Hindu could not easily forget the havoc that Mohommed's followers in his holy name have been doing in this country. Islam arrived at nothing less than universal brotherhood. But this idea of universal brotherhood meant to the organised Arabs and later on to the Muslim world an Islamic brotherhood and nothing more. To the protagonists of that religion there was ample support for that idea in their own scripture. On a reading of the Quran it is easy to find a passage in which Mohommed urges the believers to fight and take captives after slaughter in the land. It was unfortunately such "revelations" that appealed to the imagination of the nebulous masses of the Arabian deserts. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that the "orthodox" Ulemas supported the rapacious sovereigns to carry fire and sword in the sacred name of Islam: for to "kill idolators wherever they could be found, to take them prisoners and besiege them and lay in wait for them in every convenient place," they said, had the positive sanction of the Quran. But to the credit of the Prophet it must be said that he had advised his followers not to take all the verses of the Quran literally. "There are some verses that are decisive; they are the mother of the book and others ambiguous." It was for the followers of Mohommed to choose and interpret these verses. And the self-seeking ambitious leaders of the uncultured flock aroused the latter to commit acts which had a look of divine sanction in the Quran. It was the devil quoting the Bible. They could not understand the doctrine of self-realization through self-subordination which Mohommed preached. One class of people, the Sufis understood Mohommed, but their voice would not be listened to in the clatter of armour and the rattle of drums of the onrushing Muslim hordes. Islam was on the war-path, though Mohommed, their prophet, did not approve wars of aggression. In the history of this world this was not the first time when the name of the Holy of Holies had been invoked for man's base ends. It was not the first time that religion had been interpreted to satisfy the will of rapacious sovereigns and a greedy but sturdy people and the consequence had been that the followers of the Prophet like others came to use their sword too freely. This was how the "questionable and ambiguous" verses of the Quran came to be interpreted and as another Mussalman, Mr. Pickthal once put it this was a falling away from the spirit of Islam. In fact the "Mussalman" had turned his back on what had been enjoined on him, the part which ordered him to seek knowledge and education and to study God's creation.

This explains why the Quranic injunction,—“there is no compulsion in religion”—has not been heeded to tell the present day by a

large section of Mohommed's followers. The Prophet enjoined on his followers not "to repulse them who call upon their Lord in the morning and in the evening desiring his face." "Repulse them," said he, "and thou wilt be unjust."

The religion of the Prophet became a sectarian religion and dogmas and creeds and fanaticism darkened its history. The President of the Tabligh Conference was quite right when he remarked that at the present time the religion of Islam had to be preached first to those who are under its flag and "goad them to act upon it." This is not the first Mussalman who begins to recognise this important fact. Mr. Pickthal said only the other day that the conduct and condition of the Muslims now were very bad advertisements for the teaching of Islam. We trust the Mussalman brotherhood would take heed to this advice of their own brethren, try to cast off the slough and allow Islam to shed its light and illumine the world.

We wish this Presidential address found its way into the millions of homes in India—both Hindu and Mussalman to disabuse the Hindu of his wrong notions of Islam and to teach the Mussalman what his noble religion has taught him.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The 93rd Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Craddock Town, Nagpur, C. P., with great eclat and devotion. Besides poor feeding, a meeting was convened under the presidency of Mr. A. S. Sathe, Add. District and Sessions Judge, in which lectures were delivered by eminent speakers. Swami Viswananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay, graced the occasion and spoke eloquently on the life and teachings of the Master.

The Sacred Day was also observed by the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Asansole, Bengal; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Guntur; Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddappah; The Andhra Social Welfare League, Bezwada. The devotees of Ranchi, Behar, also celebrated the Birthday.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA'S VISIT TO ANDHRA DESHA

On the occasion of the 93rd Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Yatiswarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras, paid a visit to Andhra Desha at the earnest invitation of some Telegu devotees. At Bezwada, under

the auspices of the Andhra Social Welfare League, the Swami delivered two lectures on the "Essentials of Hinduism" and the "Ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda" on the evenings of the 19th and 20th of March, at Gandhi Chowk and Museum Hall. At Guntur under the auspices of the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, the Swami gave a series of three addresses at the Municipal Library on the 22nd, 24th, and 25th of March,—the subjects being, "Message of Sri Ramakrishna," "Ideals of Saṅgatan Dharma," and "Teachings of the Gita." Besides these, the Swami also held two conversazione, one at the Municipal Library and another at the Lokabandhu Hall. The Swami returned to Madras on the morning of the 30th March last.

REPORTS

1. The Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar, while recording a number of 19785 patients including the 668 indoor patients treated, issues an appeal for funds for important objects—Worker's Quarters, one Dharma-shala, one Rest-house for pilgrim indoor-patients' friends and relatives, a building for Depressed Class School, etc.

2. The Biennial Reports of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sarisha, Diamond Harbour, and the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Lucknow, for 1925 and 1926, after showing satisfactory progress in different activities of the centres within their limited means, appeal to the generous public for funds for carrying on their works in a better way.

3. The Hon. Secretary of the Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur in its Annual Report for 1926 says that for want of active sympathy and support of the public, the Society's activities have been handicapped. He appeals for funds.

4. The Ramakrishna Mission Out-door Charitable Dispensary, Bhubaneswar in its Biennial Report for 1925 and 1926 contains an appeal for funds in the name of the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj. For want of sufficient funds the dispensary cannot purchase upto-date medicines and surgical outfit. The kind-hearted people are requested to help the workers of the Mission to serve the poverty-stricken populace of Orissa.

5. The Ramakrishna Students' Home, Bangalore City, maintained fifteen boys in 1926. The management brings to the notice of the benevolent public that the response to the appeal issued year after year is not quite generous. It appeals anew for funds to enable it to serve more efficiently the cause of the poor helpless students—to which it has devoted itself. A statement of accounts is attached to every report.

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, PORTLAND, OREGON, U. S. A.

We have received a report of the work of the Vedanta Society, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A. for 1927, a summary of which is placed before the readers for information:—

During the year under review besides giving lectures on Vedanta on various subjects, Swami Prabhavananda has given series of lectures on the following: 1. Buddhism; 2. The Philosophy of the Upanishads; 3. World Teachers; 4. Yoga and Mysticism.

The series of lectures on Buddhism was given early in the year to small but interested audiences. It covered the life of Buddha, his teachings and the influence of his philosophy. In many ways the group of discourses dealing with the philosophy of the Upanishads was one of the greatest studies ever given in this city. The full course was open to the public, affording perhaps the greatest opportunity ever offered in this part of the west, to come in touch with the highest philosophy. The group of lectures upon the World Teachers was perhaps, the most popular course Swami has offered. This series too was open to the public, and covered the lives and teachings of Krishna, LaoTze, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna. With the series dealing with Yoga and Mysticism the Swami closed the year's work. It was so arranged that the lectures covered the regular Sunday services and the two week day classes, for the latter part of the month of February. It was an intensely interesting course of lessons and lectures. The society made a special effort to advertise the series. Much interest and enthusiasm was aroused.

In the regular class work, the study of the Gita was finished. The lessons in Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms and lessons from the Bible are being continued. The first Friday night of each month is question night, with the public invited. Much interest has been aroused in these meetings by the Swami's interesting method of conducting them. Opinions are expressed and viewpoints clarified; while at the close of each discussion, Swami never fails to give a satisfactory summary.

During the month of October Swami Prabhavananda, at the urgent request of friends living in St. Louis, Missouri, spent two weeks in that city lecturing with great success to large and enthusiastic audiences. A permanent interest was created through these lectures and a centre established. Swami Akhilananda is expected to take charge of the centre in a short time. During Swami

Prabhavananda's absence in the East activities of the Portland Centre were continued in charge of the students.

Since Christmas day fell upon a Sunday this year, it was fittingly observed with special devotional services at the regular Sunday morning service hour. In the evening the Swami gave a masterly discourse on "Jesus, a World Teacher." To many of the students and friends this was one of the best lectures Swami Prabhavananda has delivered in Portland.

Swami Vivekananda's Birthday was fittingly celebrated on the fourth Sunday in January. The theme of the morning address was "Vivekananda the Man", in which he gave a pen-picture of the great Swami's life and career. The subject for the evening discourse was "Vivekananda's contribution to World Thought." Quite a large audience listened to this stirring tribute.

The Ninety-second Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna's birth was observed on Sunday, March fourth. Again the little chapel was brightened by the floral offerings of the students. A beautiful picture of the Master was draped in dainty sprays of fern and pink roses. In the evening a large audience gathered to hear Swami Prabhavananda give a most illuminating discourse on "Ramakrishna and the Modern Age." It was very satisfying and heartening to hear Swami point out that the Master's blessed life and message was not for the East alone, but for the whole world.

Perhaps the most congenial part of the evening was the dainty refreshments served by the committee in charge. It is hard to put into words the feeling of fellowship engendered among the students as an outgrowth of such gatherings. The one just mentioned is the second such held since the Society has occupied its new quarters.

In conclusion the report refers to the all too short but delightful visit of Swami Dayananda and three students from the Temple in San Francisco last August.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

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JUNE 1928

[No.]

PRAYER

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न जानामि दानं न च ध्यानयोगं

न जानामि तन्त्रं न च स्तोत्रमन्त्रं ।

न जानामि पूजां न च न्यासयोगं

गतिस्त्वम् गतिस्त्वम् त्वमेका भवानि ॥

न जानामि पुण्यं न जानामि तीर्थं

न जानामि मुक्तिं लयं वा कदाचित् ।

न जानामि भक्तिं व्रतं वापि मातः

गतिस्त्वं गतिस्त्वं त्वमेका भवानि ॥

Oh Mother, I have made no charity ; I have done no meditation ; I have observed no sacred rites or rituals ; nor have I uttered any holy text in prayer. I have performed no worship ; nor I have ever renounced. I have done nothing. Therefore, Thou, Mother of the Universe, the only hope, Thy helpless son seeks refuge in Thee.

Good Mother, pious deeds or pilgrimage to holy land I have performed none. I maintain no desire for salvation ; nor wish to be merged in Thee. I observe no vows ; I possess no devotion ; I am void of all. Therefore, Thou, Mother of the Universe, the only hope, Thy helpless son seeks refuge in Thee.

SANKARA

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA.

D. :—Maharaj, these different forms of worship and rituals, these different gods and goddesses,—do they mean anything special?

Swami :—All these are meant for the one and the same purpose—God-realisation. There is so much difference between one man and another in their taste as in their temperament that no one golden mean can be assigned to them all for their Sadhana or spiritual advancement. Different temperaments require different ways of Sadhana or worship. To meet these varying demands the Scriptures have, therefore, prescribed four principal modes,—Samadhi, Dhyana, Japam and prayer, and external worship. The best kind of worship is Samadhi or the direct worship of the Brahman—the realisation of the Omnipresent Reality face to face. The second in importance is Dhyana or meditation. In it exist two things, ‘Himself’ and ‘myself’;—Japam and prayer and the like have no room there. When meditation deepens, one constantly ‘experiences the holy form of one’s Istam or Chosen Deity,—form, pure and simple, Japam and the rest being totally left out of account. The next step is Japam and prayer. At this stage one sings the glory of the Lord in prayer or chants or mutters the hallowed name of one’s Chosen Deity, simultaneously meditating upon the blessed form that is borne out by that holy name. The last is the external worship. This consists in worshipping the supreme Being in Pratika or images. These different forms of worship, different gods and goddesses—all these are but the creation of the human mind. They mark the different degrees of progress of the mind, its evolutionary stages, in its onward march to God. A man desires to perform Sadhana. Now, what should he do? Should he begin from any place? No. He must start exactly from where his mind stands and gradually proceed stage after

stage till the Goal is reached. Take the case of an ordinary man : if you ask him to meditate upon the supreme Brahman who is without name or form ; or if you ask him to practise Samadhi, he will not be able to comprehend anything ; nor will he be well-disposed towards it ; and consequently the result will be that he will give up his Sadhana altogether. But on the other hand if he worships the Brahman in an image with offerings of flowers and sacred leaves, he will think he has done something. For sometime at least, his mind will be free from all distractions to which every moment it is liable to fall. He will be unperturbed, and verily he will rejoice in it ; and by and by will he 'outgrow' that state even.

The finer the mind grows, the lesser becomes the joy of a man in the enjoyment of things 'gross' and secular. If you begin Puja or external worship now, some time after, you will naturally feel the impulse that Japam is a better substitute. Some time still later, you will again find in meditation a far better substitute, and so on. This is therefore called the 'gradual process' for the 'natural growth' of the human mind. In the course of this mental evolution, the little experiences the mind acquires do not get spoiled; it retains them and stores them up in the memory.

Take another illustration : you are standing down in the court-yard and you are to get on the terrace. What will you do ? Surely you are to find out the stair-case and crossing over the steps one after another you reach the roof. Instead of this gradual process if you are thrown across the air right up to the house-top, that certainly means a great deal of trouble and hardship to you. You can avoid any hurt or injury only by following the gradual process. Similar is the case with the world within. To avoid all untoward circumstances in your march towards spiritual realisations, you are to follow the graduated path that is chalked out for us by the seers of the past. And

these different forms of worship constitute that path. Ways and means, processes and procedures, rules and regulations—these exist in the physical world as well as in that of the mind. The same phenomenon rules both.

D.:—If a distracting thought, well-known to me, persists in appearing in the mind, what shall I do then, Noble Sir,—how shall I check it?

Swami:—“This thought is immensely harmful to me; this can bring about ruin unto me,—nay this can kill me; this is my worst enemy;”—impress this idea on your mind by repeated efforts. If you can stamp this impression once upon the mind, you will find the distracting element vanishing into air in no time. Take for example, this boy who is sitting by. “This boy—who is that? I don’t know him. He is good for nothing; he is worthless;”—if you persist in thinking this wise for sometime, ere long, you will find, to you he has become so; he will be of no importance whatsoever. Your mind will no longer turn towards him. And why? It is because you have pressed upon the mind that idea. To take one more illustration, a little child: it does not know what results from taking poison. If you give a little of it unto the child, it won’t care; it won’t be afraid of the poison. But if that very same thing is given to you, you will startle and at once jump off to a safe distance. It is because you know the effect of poison; you know, to take poison is to die. So we see the mind is a funny thing; whatever you hold before it, it will learn.

One thing, and a very serious thing I tell you: first of all fix your ‘ideal’, and then struggle on to realise that ideal. And ‘the ideal must never be lowered.’ Indeed, God is the highest ideal, God who is smaller than an atom and bigger than the solar system that we know of;—He who shines forth everywhere, at all times and in all beings, in you and myself as well as in the little,—only differing in manifestation, greater or smaller. It is again

the same Being, the Atman that pervades the entire universe. Verily, nothing is superior to Him. Make Him therefore your ideal, Him and Him alone. Try a little, and you will realise what an inexhaustible fount of joy is He. The world, you have had enough experience of it! Now try the otherside,—seek God. The veil of Maya (ignorance hangs before you obstructing your vision of God;) break it off and lo, He is there! 'To cross the Maya's bounds is indeed a hard task; but not an impossibility,—not that man cannot do. Man has crossed and you can also do. Strive on and the success is at hand; 'knock and it shall be opened unto you.' The world shall stand transformed to these very eyes.

D. :—Regarding the Scriptures, what attitude should we maintain? Should we put faith in their authority?

Swami :—Certainly, you should! All these are true—these scriptural injunctions. For the good and guidance of mankind through ages, have all these been formulated by them of the past, and handed down from generation to generation, from father to son, upto the present day. You must obey them.

One other thing: as regards Karma (work), you must never give it up wholly. For, without it your very existence would be impossible. It will lead you to the end (to God-realisation). Man does not know when Karma began, but he knows where it ends. Verily, with God-realisation all shackles of Karma fall off; it is when no work remains to be done any more. But before that state, you are within the bounds of Karma; you are to work. Verily, verily, I tell unto you, by doing your Karma for the sake of Karma you shall attain to the greatest Good.

D. :—And what sort of food are we to take, Sir? Any discrimination about it?

Swami :—A very difficult question you ask; it's very hard to answer, indeed it is so! For men differ so widely

in their constitution as in this system that it is hardly possible to lay down any hard and fast rule about food for them all. One thing may be suitable to your constitution, but the same may not suit mine. You may easily assimilate a thing but I may not. Our Scriptures therefore have not laid much stress on the point. In the Gita we come across certain passages referring to the discrimination of food; but that is a too 'general classification'. Roughly speaking, it can be said that all sorts of rich dishes should be avoided. And in the light of this general remark one should choose out one's own food according to the powers of assimilation.

D. :—Maharaj, this non-vegetarian diet,—does it not involve sin,—sin for killing animals?

Swami :—No. This is no argument at all. That they say, Ahimsa (non-injury) is the greatest virtue,—when that? That is indeed after Samadhi, when the supreme knowledge has been attained, when God has been realised in all creatures. Then only, Ahimsa. Before that no amount of talk can make it so. It is when you realise that the same Atman resides in you as well as in the little ant, and no difference exists; then only Ahimsa. Before that it is impossible. You speak of Ahimsa, but truly speaking, can you avoid Himsa? What food you take?—Potato? That shoots forth young sprouts when planted; these bring in new crop;—is that lifeless? And you eat it. You sow the paddy grain; it grows into plant; and this again bears new paddy. Is it then lifeless? Take for instance 'water'. Test it with a microscope and you will find millions of little lives abounding in a single drop, and you drink it! Again, to live is to take breath. Now, with every breath you kill millions of little creatures. Take the case of those who make much of this vegetable diet. What food do they prescribe?—Milk and Ghee? Now, how do you get milk!—By depriving the poor creature, the tiny calf, of its legitimate

suck. That's an extremely cruel act. That is no sin,—all sin in a bit of fish or meat! Such a flimsy argument cannot stand. Such a thing never the Hindus had. It is a Vaishnavite interpolation.

IDEALS OF INDIAN EDUCATION

The history of Indian life during the last century and a half exhibits a struggle and a compromise between the two conflicting ideals ;—one being the synthetic cultural heritage of India and the other, the patented Occidental philosophy of life. And it is needless to point out that the educational institutions of this country stand as visible symbols and the meeting-centres, as it were, of these mutually repellent cultural forces of the East and the West. In fact the educational problem,—the most vital of all the problems of the land, has now become an All-India concern in as much as the future drift of Indian life depends entirely upon how India should tackle this problem and chisel out the educational machinery to facilitate the growth of budding Indian nationalism. The veteran educationists of the country have therefore bestowed their most careful thought and attention upon this all-absorbing question of the day, as they have realised in their heart of hearts that the moral aberration of Indian life from its own spiritual orbit is unmistakably a resultant of the interplay of the two opposite ideals and the unwarranted leaning of the Indian mind to the dazzling ephemeral products of the Western culture. The long-drawn arrays of academic corridors are now ringing with the swelling chorus of protests and dissatisfaction as the intellectual vision of the people is growing clearer day by day. After age-long torpidity the magic curtain has been rolled off from the horizon and the baneful effects of the much-vaunted culture of the West have been brought home to the thinking section of the Indian people. Rightly has Dr. Tagore remarked in 'The centre of Indian culture' ;—"English education as now given is for the Indian mind a kind of food which contains only one particular ingredient and even that not fresh, but dried and packed in tins." Persons of the high eminence and intellectual attainment of Sir John Woodroffe likewise have felt not the

least scruple to characterise the present system of Indian education as 'deracialising, demoralising, and deforming'. Forsooth, the Indians have been taught to give the go-by to the glorious heritage of the past, their arts and science, literature and philosophy and, to crown all, their transcendent spiritual ideal in a medley of Occidental cultures that have received a right royal reception in every field of our activity. What a greater tragedy can there be in the life-history of a nation than this self-hypnotisation and the total negation of the accumulated wisdom of ages in blind pursuit after a system quite uncongenial to its temper and genius, and deterrent to the all-round growth of sturdy manhood.

To-day at a very late hour we have been awakened to the depth of moral turpitude, to which our blind apism of everything foreign, has dragged us unconsciously down. The Indian life stands in the danger of being foundered in the very back-wash of Westernism. No more do the flowers of Indian youth grow bright and radiant with the lively impulses of budding manhood, nor do their unsophisticated hearts beat with pride and jubilation at the thought of their hoary civilisation and the glorious traditions of the past. They unhesitatingly yoke themselves to the grinding wheels of the educational machinery and emerge out a spent-up polyglot with a heavy mass of ill-assorted and undigested materials in the brain. The very back-bone of their life is broken and they exhibit a woful lack of confidence in their innate strength and possibilities, and disclose a moral and nervous breakdown in the very prime of life as a result of habitually feeding their imagination upon the god-less ethics of the West in the stifling green-house of intellectual culture. These are some of the best guerdons they earn at the expense of their 'sweet wine of youth', health and money, and the juvenile plasticity of mind!

In fairness it must be admitted that western education is not an unmitigated evil. In spite of its various drawbacks, it has its redeeming features as well. It has, nonetheless, contributed a great deal to the creation of 'Modern India'. The bold spirit of adventure; an accession of political consciousness; an irresistible desire to peer into the mysteries of the unknown quarters of the globe; in fact, a spirit of self-assertiveness in every sphere of our social activities;—is, after all, not an unwelcome legacy of the

West to the people of India. It has furthermore broken down the artificial barriers and unlocked the hidden treasures of the European world, its philosophy and science, to the Indian genius. It needs no stretch of imagination to realise that to attempt to fall back upon the past without any reference to the modern age with its many-sided activities, is as preposterous as to command the Ganges after these countless æons to recede back to her original source ! It will be, as well, a narrow-minded chauvinism to expect that the Indian Universities which have installed Western learning to the exclusion of Oriental culture, should altogether be levelled to the ground, and life should be started anew on their ruins with purely Indian culture to feed our imagination upon. Nor is it wise to withdraw ourselves altogether from our past glorious traditions and stuff our mind with exclusively foreign knowledge and ideas ; for to do so is to train a waif in the alien atmosphere of a stranger's home. The problem therefore is how to meet the cultural impact of the West beating on the shore of our experience, and to restore India again to her enviable position of eminence.

Education has been defined in various ways from different perspectives. Mr. Fisher seems to be partially right when he says that education should be the education of the whole man, spiritually, intellectually and physically. In fact an education that fails to draw out powers that lie dormant in man and stimulate the creative instincts of human nature is a failure. " Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-building assimilation of ideas. Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man."—This is how Swami Vivekananda has defined education. In every scheme of education there must be a happy accommodation of all the aspects of culture, moral, physical and intellectual in their balanced proportion. The present system that accentuates the development of the intellect to the neglect of the other two sides, has dragged many an unwary aspirant to a bog of unprofitable life. In India the cultural basis being wholly spiritual, the be-all and end-all of education has, since remote antiquity, been the attainment of perfection, and any other culture except the culture of the Self has been

treated as secular and of secondary importance. So proclaim the Vedas:—"There are two kinds of knowledge to be known, the higher and the lower knowledge. Of these, the lower knowledge is the following: the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda, phonetics, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody and astronomy. The higher is that by which the Imperishable is reached." Thus the Sruti here means to relegate all knowledge that is merely intellectual and deals only with the relative aspects of life to the category of lower knowledge, and holds up the realisation of the immutable Atman as the highest knowledge. So an education that produces merely intellectual prodigies, utterly fails in its purpose when it cannot awaken man to the 'Visions of the Golden Threshold', develop the latent possibilities and throw open channels for a full and healthy expression of manhood. It would therefore be a sheer suicidal act if we shut our eyes to the actual fundamental of our indigenous culture in our frenzied attempt to readjust our educational programme to the modern ideas of progress.

At the present stage of the world when the currents of life do no longer eddy round within the limited geographical boundaries of a particular race or nationality but pulsate from one end of the world to the other, any educational scheme that would taboo altogether the synthetic cultural achievements of the rest of the world would be an incomplete and maimed one. But we must not forget at the same time that "a national education is first and foremost an education in the national idealism,—its aim is the emancipation of sympathy and intellect". As the external must be in organic continuity with the internal in individual life, so also in the corporate life of a nation, anything that would not suit the genius and temper of the people but would interfere with the spontaneity of its growth, must be shunned like a deadly poison. English, though now an international language, has practically ousted all our rich provincial languages and has been the moulding and guiding principle for about a century and a half in the domain of culture. As the matter now stands everything from the top to the bottom has to be dyed in the tints of English language;—indeed a life-crushing proposition in the progressive realisation of educational end!

Mrs. Besant speaks out the whole truth when she bursts forth in righteous indignation :—" Nothing can more swiftly emasculate national life than allowing the education of the youth to be controlled by foreign influences. It must be controlled by Indians, shaped by Indians, carried on by Indians. It must hold up Indian ideals of devotion, wisdom and morality, and be permeated by the Indian religious spirit ; " for maintains Mr. Spinoza that the Government will, if it controls the education of the nation, aim to restrain rather than develop the energies of men. Time is indeed ripe when in view of the rank demoralisation of the children of the soil, the provincial languages and literatures of India must occupy their pristine position of honour, and English must go back to a subsidiary position in the curricula of Indian academies. But how to cope with the diversity of languages is another great problem that confronts India today. Optimists are not wanting who advocate the principle of introducing one language throughout the country as the medium of instruction for it is contended, and not unreasonably, that the want of uniformity in the medium of instruction, while promoting exclusiveness and narrow provincial outlook, cuts at the very root of Indian solidarity and nationalism. So Sister Nivedita emphatically declares that if all people talk the same language, learn to express themselves in the same way, if all are trained and equipped to respond in the same way to the same forces, then our unity will stand self-demonstrated and unflinching. We shall have then acquired national solidarity and a power of prompt and intelligent action. The greatest personalities of the present age have not therefore laboured in vain to break down those linguistic barriers that have divided India into narrow groups and have rendered the task of unifying the heterogeneous elements into a homogeneous whole, all the more difficult. To remove this stumbling factor, they have gripped Hindi, the most widely spoken and cultivated language in India as the only suitable *Lingua Franca*, and it is not premature to anticipate that with the Indian spirit of adaptability the non-Hindi speaking communities would accommodate themselves to this language with the least possible effort to bring the various units together on a basis of linguistic synthesis.

But in a politically subordinate and economically helpless country like India, the universities are, *ip-so-facto*, under the

financial thumb of the Government and are therefore to sail close to the humour of the 'Pay-Master' with the result that the education that we are receiving is a negative and not a man-making one. It is needles to point out that the academic freedom—freedom from state-interference and control, is an indispensable desideratum for the intellectual uplift of the entire people of India. History bears an eloquent testimony to the absolute freedom from state-control, enjoyed by the ancient universities of India in the halcyon days of hoary antiquity. The history of education, thus, in ancient India reveals two primary types of university life;—the old Hindu type with its domestic organisation of the teacher and the taught, represented in later days by the universities of Mithila and Navadwip, and the Buddhist type with its monastic organisation which developed into the universities of Odantapura, Nalanda and Vikramasila. Every student of Indian history now fully knows that except for occasional visits of courtesy there was absolutely no interference by the state with its university life though the splendid buildings of the universities sprang into existence through the munificent donations of successive kings and wealthy patrons. But times have changed and with them the system of Indian education has suffered a great set-back. Now in our weak-kneed impotence most of us bent down with a slave-mentality, look up to the 'Masters' for a drop of manna to quench our thirst and do not care in the least for the past educational history of India built upon the labours of centuries and the sacred traditions of our forefathers. It is now high time that we must gather from the story of the past the dynamic forces of the future and stand on the solid ground of self-reliance to come to our own in every sphere of our activity and roll back the bugbear of dependence from our mental horizon.

Our educational system must provide for the cultivation of Indian art and science, philosophy and literature, epics and mythologies which will foster in every individual a healthy spirit of pride in his indigenous culture and civilisation, and stimulate patriotic sentiments. "We must study independent of foreign culture different branches of the knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and science." We must be inspired by a shining vision of the society that was and that is to be, of

the triumphs that thought will achieve in time to come, and of the ever-widening horizon of man's survey over the universe. What is now needed is to "nationalise" in spirit the entire outlook of Indian education by a change of heart and the angle of vision though in a dependent country like ours it may not be possible to make it fully "national" all at once. A systematic effort should be made to stir up and create an unfailing interest amongst the students in what constitutes their glory and justifies even now their pre-eminent position as one of the most cultured races of the world. In all schemes of education, technical branches of study must have an honourable place to stimulate industries and thereby to solve as far as practicable the economic problems of the country. A passive awareness of the extinct beauties of "Rome and Renaissance" would no longer stir up human energies, but a vista of future possibilities must as well be held up before to fillip them up to further achievements. In short the educational policy of the future must be shaped not with the same light-heartedness that had so long characterised the university authorities in India, but with a seriousness of purpose and a broadness of vision which should comprehend the political, social, economical and, above all, the spiritual education of the people so as to save the country from any further disintegration and to restore it back to its pristine position of glory and eminence.

SPIRIT OF HINDUISM

By Swami Viswananda

It is very difficult to give a cut and dry definition of Hinduism. The people living in this country, who go by the name of Hindus differ so widely in their customs, manners and even with regard to their religious conceptions, that one may doubt the wisdom of grouping them together under the one name Hindu. The Hindu of the Punjab differs so much from the Hindu of the Madras Presidency that a European traveller was constrained to make the statement that the former differs from the latter more than an Englishman from a Frenchman. The late Mr. Montague, before he gave the Reforms and put India on the high-road to Self government, came to see this country with his own eyes and to study the condition of the people. It is known to all that he travelled over the length and breadth of this vast India-continent and at the end of his tour he put this question

to an eminent Hindu gentleman : " Well, I have seen your country with mine own eyes. Can you tell me where is the underlying unity behind this endless variety ? " The Hindu gentleman was perplexed and at last he stumbled upon an answer and it was : " It is the Gayatri-mantram." Whether we go to Kashmir or Tinnevely, Bombay or Bengal, we find the Hindus repeating the same Gayatri-mantram, and there is an element of truth in this casual remark.

The Hindus acknowledge the authority of the Vedas and believe that the Vedas are the revealed Book of the Hindus. We are all familiar with the common saying in Sanskrit : " Whenever there is conflict between Sruti and Smriti, Sruti must prevail." We have a vast Sanskrit literature, Srutis and Smritis, Itihasas and Puranas, all going by the name of Shastras. But with regard to religious matters, these latter have not the same authority as the Vedas.

The Sruti consists of the four Vedas. The Vedas can be broadly divided into the Karma Kanda and the Jnana Kanda. The Karma Kanda consists of the Brahmana and the Samhita. It deals with the rites and ceremonies, but as we proceed on we find an inquiring spirit, a spirit of investigation into the ultimate Reality. All the gods Indra, Varuna, Mitra, and so on, all of them melt into one God. In the Upanishads, we find that all these millions of gods are dissolved into one God. " Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti ;"—the ultimate Cause is one, He is called by different names. These Upanishads are the bedrock, the basis and foundation of Hinduism. There is one remarkable point of difference between Hinduism and all other religions of the world. Hinduism is not based on the teachings of any particular man like the other religions of the world. We cannot say that Sri Krishna or any other person was the founder of Hinduism. It was existing long before. The glory of Sri Krishna is that he is the best interpreter of Vedic religion.

These Upanishads contain the essence of Hinduism. They tackle the vital problems of existence, *viz.*, what is man, where does he come from, where does he go, and what is the relation between man and his Maker. These are the problems which have agitated the minds of Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, and it is agitating the minds of the thinking section of the humanity at large. We all know that these problems have been solved once for all by the ancient Rishis, those to whom the great truths were revealed, those who have composed these Upanishads. The sayings of those wonderful Rishis of the Upanishads still ring in our ears. Addressing the whole world a seer of truth proclaims : " I have seen Him. All those who have ears, listen to me. I have realised Him

in my own heart, and by knowing Him alone, a man can cross this ocean of darkness. There is no other path for that." Here is a bold declaration, a challenge to the world: "I have seen the Truth and here is the Path for you." These Upanishads are indeed the highest point to which the Hindu genius had obtained. The world has never seen a more sublime, a greater philosophy than the Upanishads, and of these Upanishads, the Hindus will be proud for ever, because the ultimate problems, the riddles of human life, the nature of the First Cause, all have been solved there. And there we find the real Hinduism, the essence of Hinduism. Nachiketa of the Katha Upanishad puts the most pertinent question to Yama: "How to attain peace, how to have that eternal, undisturbed joy and bliss?" And the answer comes: "To them alone belongs that eternal peace and happiness, who have found out the Eternal in the midst of these vanishing shadows, the One in the midst of the many; to them belongs the eternal Shanti and to none else." The great discoverers of the laws of the spiritual world have been termed "RISHIS". A Rishi means a "Seer", one who has seen the Truth. These Upanishads contain those great laws which were discovered by our ancient Rishis. The Mundaka Upanishad says: "Pranava is the bow, the mind is the arrow, and the Brahman is the target. O man, aim at that target and be fixed once for all as the arrow is fixed on the target." This is for all men who can think of the problems beyond death, problems which every man should solve. And the Upanishads are the bedrock, the basis, and the very essence of Hinduism.

When we come down to the age of the Puranas and Smritis, we find there is a war of ideals. And we all know that fights and quarrels are going on even now in this country between the Shaivites and the Vaishnavites on account of their rank ignorance of each other's doctrines. The Vaishnavites are never going to the Shiva temples and *vice versa*, and this narrow-mindedness is the product of these puranic doctrines. But in the Upanishads, we do not find either Shiva or Vishnu. We find only one supreme Being; the causeless Cause, "the unmoved Mover of this Universe", as Plato observes. In fact, all different schools of philosophy have their origins or geneses in these Upanishads. But Hinduism as we find to-day is not the Hinduism of the Upanishads. There have been so many ramifications in Hindu Society that it is difficult to find out the true spirit of the Upanishads. There is one important method of worship which has become to-day inseparable from Hinduism, *i. e.*, image-worship. It was only after the decline of Buddhism,

That image-worship came into vogue in this country. What is the truth behind image-worship? In the Vedic age we have the Pratika Upasana. According to the philosophy of Ramanuja, that which is not Brahman is taken as a substitute for the Para Brahman. In ancient times, there was a custom, whereby when a new bride came to the bridegroom's house she was shown the Arundhathi Nakshatra, a tiny star. And what the bridegroom did was to point to a bigger star and when the attention was fixed upon that, she would find just below that star, the tiny star, Arundhathi. Man cannot grasp God as He is in his true nature. It is the extraordinary man, a Paramahansa, who alone knows what God is. The average man must have some sort of image. Therefore this image has been held before his mind as a substitute for God. But we must not mistake the stone or earthen image as the omnipotent God. The Hindu devotee worships God, in and through a stone image. So long as he is not enlightened he cannot know God as He is. Swami Vivekananda was very fond of saying a funny story: once a man was asked to make an image of God Shiva. This man had not seen Shiva, neither his father nor his grandfather. After years of struggle, he made the image of a monkey. So, when man with all his limitations tries to imagine God, to think of God as He is in his true nature, he makes a hideous caricature. It is only the Paramahansa and the unthinking men who do not require images. But those who are in the intermediate stages want some sort of images—an iron chest, or an angel with wings, the Goddess Kali, Shiva or Vishnu or Ganapathi. In fact we require some sort of image in order to concentrate, to focus our mind upon, but all the time we must remember that we are worshipping the Omnipotent and the Infinite in and through that image. This is the truth and philosophy about image-worship. The Hindus have stuck to it and it has come to stay in this land. How many great Saints and Mahatmas have attained to the highest plane of spiritual life by beginning their spiritual career with this sort of worship. We know of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna and so many Saints in the Maharashtra like Tukaram, Choka and others who began their life by worshipping the God Vittal of Pandarpur. There is no question that all these men have attained to the highest spiritual life.

Then there is the Socio-religious structure of the Hindu society, viz the Varnashrama Dharma. This system lays down certain principles according to which every unit, every member of the social organism would realise the highest potentiality by following the line of least resistance. At the top of the Varnashrama

system was the Brahmana. We find in the Bhagavat Gita, the characteristics of a Brahmana: "The Brahmin is a man who has got Shama and Dama, that is, control of his external senses, and his mind, and who has got Tapas." He is also the man who has Vijnanam, the supreme Knowledge. Such a man is Brahmana i.e. a man who has set his face against name and fame and pleasures of the world, who thinks more of heaven than of earth. Such a man deserves to be honoured and respected everywhere. The Brahmin was at the top. In Hindu society the Brahmin even to-day is honoured, because he maintains the ancient culture, but unfortunately, the Brahmin has fallen from his high pedestal. As has been remarked, the very day the Brahmin entered into competition with the other castes in the arena of the world, he lost his power and prestige. But although the Brahmin has fallen from his high pedestal, still he has preserved the culture and Dharma of the Hindus.

Next comes the Kshatriya, the soldier, the man who protects society. The Kshatriya is the man who is born to rule, who has got more Rajas in him, and who defends the society from foreign aggression. And then comes the Vaishya, the man who devotes himself to trade and commerce and last of all, the Sudra, the servant. This distinction was based on the principle of the three gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. This is one of the fundamental principles of Hindu religion. Sattva is goodness, purity, devotion, love. Rajas is activity, strength, vitality and Tamas is inertia, laziness. The Sattvik man has got the strength and virility of the Rajasik man but, at the same time he has got the power to regulate his strength. Sometimes the Sattvik man may look like the Tamasik man, because he looks inactive and lazy, but the Tamasik man can never be active whereas the Sattvik man can be active. The differences in the Varnashrama Dharma are based on these differences of gunas. The Brahmin is the Sattvik man who is striving towards God, towards Truth. The Tamasik man is away from God. But under the existing conditions, the Varnashrama system, in all its details, cannot be worked out to day. All the same, it is to be admitted that the spirit of Varnashrama Dharma can remain even to-day, as has been very beautifully described and discussed by Mahatma Gandhi in the pages of "Young India".

Then, the most important thing is the different conceptions of God. We see that we Hindus have got different ideals of God. Some amongst us are Dualists, some Monists, and some Vishishtadwaitins. And there is eternal conflict between the followers of these different

schools of philosophy. The greatest exponent of Advaita is the great Sankaracharya and that of Dwaita, Madhwacharya, Chaitanya and Vallabhacharya, and Ramanujacharya is the exponent of Vishishtadwaita. What is the difference due to? When a man takes to spiritual life, he is conscious of his limitations, of his frailties and weaknesses, and how can he maintain that he is one with God? At the beginning of his spiritual life, a man is bound to become a dualist or Dwaitin. As he goes on and makes progress more and more, morally and ethically, as he becomes purged of impurities and dross he feels that God is the Soul of the souls, that he is a part and He is the whole. This is Vishishtadwaita. And if he goes on higher and higher, soaring in the infinite expanse of the Akasha, then he realises that he is not distinct from the Absolute Supreme Being. This is what is called Advaita. So the difference lies in different standpoints. The germs of these three schools of thought are to be found in the Upanishads. There are certain passages in the Upanishads which lend support to Dwaita and others which lend support to Vishishtadwaita and others to Advaita. To quote Swami Vivekananda: "These are the stages in which the evolution of spiritual life proceeds." The man who is just stepping on spiritual life is bound to be a Dwaitin. When the same man goes higher and higher up, when he feels the light within, the line of distinction and demarcation becomes thinner and thinner. 'You are the vine and I am the branch' and last of all when he goes still further and further and becomes one with the Absolute, then he realises the meaning of the ancient saying "Tat Twam Asi". When these words were uttered, there was no necessity to write any other book on religion or philosophy, because there is no higher religion than this.

It is said in the Ramayana that once when the great Rama was seated in his Court, surrounded by the great sages, men of great spiritual attainments, he wanted to test the devotion of Hanuman. Rama said "Oh, Hanuman, what is your attitude towards me, how do you look upon me? What is your method of worship?" The great Maruthi was equal to the occasion. He looked at Rama who is worshipped by us, Hindus, as the visible and human manifestation of the Para Brahman, he saw the great sages surrounding him and said, "When I think I am the body, then I feel, O Rama, that you are the master, and I am the servant. But when I think I am the Jiva, then I think you are the purna (whole) and I am an amsa (part). When I think of the Atman, I find no distinction between you and me." This sloka silences once for all this quarrel in the name of the different dogmas and doctrines. These are the salient features of Hinduism.

The Hindus believe in the law of Karma. The great German Vedantin, Paul Deussen, came to India many years ago. One day while he was walking along the streets of Jaypore he came across a blind man. He put this question to him: "You were born blind, I believe ; if so, don't you rebel agaisnt God ?" He replied that he was born blind in this life owing to the Karma of his past life. This will show how the law of Karma has penetrated into every stratum of Hindu society. This law gives solace and consolation to millions of Hindus. But it has its own draw-backs. The law of Karma is nothing but the law of causation in the spiritual world. Every effect has a cause behind it, and the same cause produces the same effect. The law of Karma maintains that good Karma will give us good results and evil Karma will give us evil results ; but at the same time we run after evil Karma and we cannot help reaping evil results. God himself cannot save a man unless he saves himself. Then comes in the question of free Will. The law of Karma says that our happiness or misery in this life is the outcome of our past life and our future life depends upon our present life. To-day is the outcome of yesterday and to-morrow is the outcome of to-day. But the Hindus have forgotten the latter part of the law of Karma and stick to the former part only. The law of Karma does not say that we cannot raise ourselves. Speaking to Arjuna Bhagavan Shree Krishna says: "Raise yourself by your own self—your own self is your own enemy and your own self is your own friend." It is a pity that a nation which has got the Bhagavat Gita as its spring of inspiration lies prostrate. Why do people believe in one part of the law of Karma and not in the other part ? It says "You are the creator of your own destiny." The Hindu Shastras are quite explicit on this point. It is laid down that you can make yourself a saint ; even the worst sinner can become the greatest saint. Remember that you can change your destiny, that you are the creator, the architect of your own destiny. The law gives consolation to many a poor and distressed soul and it is because of this pet belief in the law of Karma that there is no revolution in India, there is no Bastille. Let us now revive the law of Karma, and believe the gospel of the Bhagavat Gita that every man is the creator of his destiny. Our forefathers were great, they have left a glorious civilization ; We are the children of great ancestors and let us make the future of our country more bright and more glorious.

THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

By Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M. A.

Chap. XI. Objections to Adhyasa,—and Answers (1)

As the doctrine of Adhyasa is, as it has been called, the crux of the Vedanta, its enemies have put forward numerous objections. We purpose to deal with some of these so as to facilitate the proper understanding of the true Advaitic doctrine of Experience as the pure Self free from all its limiting material adjuncts (*Upadhis*). At the very start, Sankara himself points out that, though the properties of *Vishaya* (material object) and *Vishayi* (the witnessing self) are such that it seems as if one cannot be mistaken for the other, such a transposition or transformation through superposition (*adhyasa*) has existed from creation (*naisargika*) and is universal in the experience of humanity (*loka-vyavahara*), and has its first cause in primordial ignorance (*ajnana*, *prakriti*, *maya*, all of which are synonymous terms, as already pointed out) concealing the pure (noumenal Self).

First, we shall meet what we may call a formal objection—*viz.*, How can adhyasa have an origin at all, if it is *naisargika*, inherent in matter at its creation. The *reply* is, that *ajnana*, or *prakriti*, or primordial matter is positive in its nature (*bhava-rupa*)—not a mere negation—and is the fine and subtle form of the grosser material world of creation. Though from a merely *theoretical* point of view, the Atman is the one existence without a second, and therefore both the efficient and material cause of the phenomenal universe when it comes into existence,—from a *practical* point of view, *prakriti* (primordial matter, *maya* or *ajnana*) is alone its *material* (*upadana*) cause,—*i.e.*, when adhyasa has taken place. From the same (or practical) point of view, therefore, this adhyasa may be reckoned as its *efficient* cause (*nimitta-karana*). Further, as we have (in the previous section) distinguished between *karanaadhyasa* and *karyadhyasa*, we can be sure, that, when Sankara refers to our *loka-vyavahara* (our worldly experience and activity), he refers to *karyadhyasa*. Hence, there is nothing objectionable in regarding *prakriti* (primordial matter) by itself alone as the material cause (*upadana-karana*) of the universe. Furthermore, no material object by itself (or the pure Self alone) without adhyasa can be *known* as at all existing. Knowledge (or experience) implies the distinction between a *bhasaka* (seer) and a *bhasya* (the object seen). The noumenal Self, being “one only

without a second", can be neither of these two. It has no parts,—and so is incapable of being transformed into anything else. For the same reason, it cannot be touched (or stained) by anything outside. It is also irresponsive, and so incapable of absorbing or incorporating into itself anything from outside so as to form a part or limb through which it can establish relations of any sort with what it is not,—with the not-Self. But the Ego (or the conditioned Self) is a self-revelation, and is experienced by all. Its experience is the effect of *karyadhyasa* (or differentiation of the pure self by the objects of the Universe). This conditioning process, while it prevents the shining of the Absolute (*Atman*), is unable to prevent the glorious self-effulgence (*Swayamprakasa*) of the latter from getting imparted, in however dilated a form, to the living self-conscious Ego (*Jivatman*). Hence, it illuminates all objects presented to it,—and we can therefore easily realise how the consciousness of the Ego arises as the effect of the earlier *adhyasa*, *viz.*, the identification of our internal organ (or mind) with the *Atman*.

We now pass to a *second* objection, which is also one purely formal (if not also frivolous) against *adhyasa*,—an objection based on Sankara's example of darkness and light, and meant only to illustrate how obvious it is that *Vishaya* (material object) and *Vishay* (the intelligent self) are, by their essential nature, contradictories, and therefore really ought not to be—though, in practice, they are—mistaken for each other. This objection is stated as follows :—(a) In a room where only a dim lamp is kept, we find light in its neighbourhood, but also darkness in a corner at some distance. *Reply*. What Sankara means is that darkness and light cannot exist together and mix so that one may be mistaken for the other. For, where one is found, the other cannot be. (b) Darkness is a mere negation, the mere absence of light. Hence it has no analogy to a material object (*Vishaya*). *Reply*. Darkness is not a mere negation. For, even when he is in a room well-lighted, a man who shuts his eyes sees darkness within his eye in the space between the lids and above the white (of the eye). (c) If darkness (*tamas*) is positive (and so has form, *rūpa*) why is it not felt by the sense of touch? *Reply*. A thing maybe felt by the touch, and still have no form,—as we know by the case of touch. Similarly, darkness, though it cannot be touched, has a form which is visible. Further, smoke is an object which can be felt only when it comes into contact with the eye, but not elsewhere,—and so it must be declared to have form. Why, then, should we not similarly conclude that darkness has a form, though it cannot be felt at all anywhere by the sense of touch.—For these and other

reasons, we conclude that darkness is not a mere negation, but something positive, and so there is nothing to object to in Sankara's illustration of light and darkness to show that *Vishaya* and *Vishayi* are contradictories.

A *third* objection to *Adhyasa* in Vedanta is as follows:—The identification of “*this mother-of-pearl*” (*idam sukṭi*) with “*this silver*” (*idam rajatam*)—which is one of our stock illustrations—does not stand on all fours with the alleged identification of the *Atman* with material objects. In the former, there are two parts (*amsas*)—(1) “*this*” (*idam*) which is *common* to the two objects identified; (2) a part, *particular or not common*,—*viz.*, mother-of-pearl in one case, and silver in the other. The mistaken experience or phenomenon (which we call *adhyasa*) arises from the superposition and identification of the latter—the *viśeṣa-amsa* (the particular part) with the *samānya-amsa* (common part). But this is not possible in the case of the alleged identification of the *Atman* (the absolute self) with material objects which forms the crux of the Vedanta. For, the *Atman* has no recognisable attribute, form, etc., and, therefore, beyond the world of our sense-perceptions, and so incapable of being mistaken for any material object (*Vishaya*). *Reply.* All this is true. Still, it is, as Sankara has not failed to tell us—a fact of universal experience that such a mistaken identification exists, and has existed for all time; and hence this experience is called *naiṣargika* by Sankara (as already stated), and also *anādi* (beginningless). The “law of seed and sprout” (*bijankura-nyaya*)—each implying the other as cause and effect—is brought forward as a settled fact to illustrate the famous Vedantic cycle,—the eternal flow and succession of the phenomena of activity and enjoyment (*kartrita bhoktrita*), desire and aversion (*raga-dveṣa*), egoity (*abhimāna*), want of discrimination (*avivēka*), and the mistaken identification of the *Atman* with material objects (*adhyasa*), together with the same phenomena in the reverse order of succession.

Objection, No. 4, is as follows:—As both mind and body are included in the living and witnessing self, it is wrong to say that there is a false or illusory identification of the two. *Reply.* In reality, neither mind nor body can anywise get included in, incorporated into, and associated or identified with, the ever-pure *Atman*. As, however, we have all our experience of phenomenal limitation,—of our relatedness to the Not-self and its consequences to us as flowing from the inevitable cyclic law above referred to, we trace it to a competent efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*). The *material* cause is *māya* or *prakṛti*, primordial matter, as it evolves into the manifested world. The *efficient*

cause of samsaric bondage is *adhyasa*, the illusory identification (or mistake, *bhrama*) of the absolute Atman with the phenomenal prakriti or material object. This *adhyasa* brings in for us our false knowledge that the knower, the object known, the means of knowledge, etc., are all real, though these *really* belong to the transient world of phenomena and vanish with the final phenomenal experience of the Self as Self (*Atmakara-vritti*, or *Akhandakara-vritti*) in which the witnessing Self—not the pure Self, *Suddha-Chaitanya*, “one only without a second” shines and is not yet dissolved (as it must be) almost at the very moment when it occurs for us.—Further, if we do not—and will not—accept the obvious fact of the illusory experience of the identification of Vishaya and Vishayi,—of the Atman with its material limiting adjunct (*upadhi*)—we shall have to *invent* some other cause, such a likeness between the two in some particular feature or attribute (*sadrisya*). There can, however, really be no *similarity* of any kind between two such complete contradictories.

In truth, however, we can easily see that, as already stated, if we, in our daily practice, regard the entire collocation from the internal organ (*ahankara*) to the outermost body (*sarira*) as the intelligent ego (*aham*),—and not as an external ‘*this*’ (*idam*) or *thou* (*yushmad*), as we really must—it is due entirely to the power and glory of direct cognition (*aparoksha*) inherent to, and inseparable from, the one pure Atman. Self-effulgence (*Svayam-prakasa*) is entirely of the essence of the Atman, and cannot in any wise belong to any of the substances included in the collocation (*sanghata*) which forms the material limitation (*upadhi*) which gets itself identified with us from the beginningless creation of this world of phenomena to the time of our final deliverance from it.

A fifth preliminary objection is stated as follows:—There is not the least foundation for acceding to Sankara’s view that this identification of Vishaya and Vishayi, matter and self,—what he calls their *midhuni-karana* (or *adhyasa*)—precedes as the necessary cause of our world-old phenomenal experience (*naisargika-loka-vyavahara*). *Reply.* (a) Here we have to make a distinction between appearance (*pratiti*) and reality or essence (*svarupa*). The two processes—*Midhuni-karana* (*adhyasa*) and *loka-vyavahara*—appear separate, but they are *in reality* to be deemed indistinguishable, for *maya* (*prakriti*) is the material cause of both, equally. (b) Our activities in the world take two forms *aham-idam* (I am this) and *mama-idam* (mine is this). The origin of both is indicated in Sankara’s use of the term, “*midhuni-kriya*”. Without such identification (*adhyasa*) there is no *me* and *mine*, or *thou* and *thine*,—there can be none of the distinctions which

constitute the world of phenomenal experience. As thus there is a distinction (of characterising quality) between these two forms of activity—viz., *midhuni-karana* and *loki-vyavahara*—we must not hesitate to distinguish between them.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA AS AN INCARNATION OF THE INDIAN GENIUS

(Continued from the May issue).

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.

Let me now proceed to consider the higher religious teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. These are even more important than his teachings about individual and family and social life because those deal with the soul whereas these deal with the vestments of the soul. His spiritual teachings reveal his Indianness to the core of his being even more than his secular wisdom. He gave to the world very valuable ideas about the *sadhana*s or methods of realisation of God. He taught that the best way of realising spiritual truths is by seeking a *guru* (teacher), because hearing truths from a *guru* leads to realisation while reading often merely informs the mind without purifying the heart. He said: "Hearing is better than reading. One understands the truth better by hearing it from the lips of the Guru or a real monk. One has not to pay attention to the unimportant details in the Scriptures. Seeing, again, is better than hearing. I mean actual realisation. It dispels all doubt. Well, the Shastras teach a good many things. But unless one realises God, unless one has devotion to His lotus feet, unless one's mind is purified, everything is useless. The Bengali almanac makes a forecast of the annual rainfall, but if you squeeze the book not a drop comes out." (Life of Sri Ramakrishna page 633). In regard to the value of ceremonials he said: "Prior to realisation none can give up ceremonials altogether. The flower drops off as soon as there is the fruit. Devotion is the fruit and ceremonials are the flower. The Sandhya merges in the Gayatri, the Gayatri in Om, and Om in Samadhi—like the chime of a bell gradually fading away." (Do page 628). About image worship he said: "You were talking of images made of clay. Well, there often comes a necessity of worshipping even such images as these. God Himself has provided these various forms of worship. The Lord has done all this to suit different men in different stages of knowledge". When such image worship purifies and broadens the mind, the worshipper of the image will eventually realise the whole universe as God. and will see the beauty of the whole world as his bright

decoration. Sri Ramakrishna said: "One day, in the course of Siva worship, I was putting the Bajra on the Sivalingam, when came the revelation that the universe itself is Siva. That day ended my worship of Siva by making His images. I was plucking flowers, when suddenly it was revealed that the flower plants were so many nose-gays!...It exactly flashed before me! I did not reason it out! I saw that each plant was a nose-gay adorning the universal form of God! That was my last flower-gathering." Sri Ramakrishna knew and taught that the paths to God-realisation are many. He said: "Well, infinite are the ways leading to the ocean of immortality. You have got to plunge in this ocean anyhow. You will be immortal if you just take a few drops of it. You may of your own accord jump into the pool, or descend along the steps, and leisurely sip the nectar, or some one may push you down—the result is the same. You will be immortal if you but drink a little of the nectar. There are infinite paths. You may follow any of these—knowledge, devotion or work. If you are sincere, you will realise Him." (Life of Sri Ramakrishna page 629). He was once asked how one may fix one's mind on God. He replied: "To that end one must chant without ceasing the name of God and His great attributes. One ought always to seek the company of holy men. One must always go among the Lord's devotees or those that have given up things of this world for the sake of the Lord. It is hard, no doubt, to fix one's mind on God in the midst of the world's cares and anxieties. Hence one must go into solitude now and then in order to meditate on Him. In the first stage of one's life in the spirit, one cannot do without solitude. The Mind, the retired Corner and the Forest are the three places for meditation. One must also practise discrimination between the Real (God) and the unreal (the phenomenal world). Thus a man may be able to shake off his attachment to the things of this world, to wealth, fame, power, and pleasures of the senses.....Do all your duties with your mind always fixed on God. As for your parents and wife and children, serve them as if they were your own but know in the inmost recesses of your heart that they are not really yours—unless they too love the Lord. The Lord alone is really your aim, and those that love the Lord." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna page 40). It is only after such discipline that real renunciation will come. After the Sadhana is perfected, the universal Mother reveals Herself. Sri Ramakrishna said: "In the stages of Sadhana, one has to hear all these (scriptures). But when she has been realised, there is no lack of knowledge,—She herself provides an unfailing supply." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna II p. 125). He taught also that the essence of the Gita is *Tyaga*. He said: "Say Gita, Gita, ten times. That

is sufficient. For said ten times, it comes to be *tyagi, tyagi*. Now *tyagi* means a person giving up the world for the sake of God—riches, honours, work with attachment, sensual pleasure, etc. In one word the Gita says *give up*." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna I, page 70). Thus the practice of the *sadhanas* leads to renunciation. Sri Ramakrishna was never tired of praising the true *sannyasin* as the true teacher and as the true power-house of altruism in the community. He said: "The sight of the perfect renunciation of the Sannyasin will teach others to renounce. If he falters, they will be degraded. For the Sannyasin is the teacher of the world." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna II, p. 95).

Even more valuable and even more full of the most essential Indianness than his revelation of *sadhanas* is his revelation of the spiritual truths. It is so many-sided, so varied, and so valuable that I cannot describe it here with any degree of completeness and must content myself with a few indications. He realised and taught that all the religions contained spiritual truth and that each system of doctrines represented a pathway to God. He said: "Every one says this is *my* land, *my* house, and so he partitions off his property. But no one partitions off the endless sky overhead. A man in ignorance thinks *his* religion is the best. But when his mind is illumined by knowledge, sectarian quarrels disappear."

He explained the intricate doctrine of Maya by a simple and telling parable: "Rama, Sita and Lakshmana are going through the woods. It is a narrow path where only one can go at a time. Rama is leading the way, bow and arrow in hand; Sita is following him; while Lakshmana is bringing up the rear with his bow and arrow. Lakshmana is intensely devoted to Rama and longs to see him constantly. But Sita is in the middle, so he cannot have a view of Rama and is sore at heart. Sita is quick enough to discover the state of the mind, and moved with sympathy, she now and then steps aside with the remark 'Behold'. Then Lakshmana is blessed with a vision of his beloved Lord. Similarly, between the Jiva and the Lord there is the Maya—the Divine Mother. Unless she, moved with sympathy, steps aside, the Jiva can never see the Lord. As soon as she is gracious, he beholds him and is rid of all misery, otherwise, however much you may discriminate, it is all to no purpose." This parable makes the doctrine of Maya more clear than learned disquisitions and dissertations on *avarana sakti* and *vikshepa sakti* and *avidya* and *vidya* and *prakriti*. Sri Ramakrishna taught that God is one when seen in a state of Samadhi and is many when looked at through the prism of the relative consciousness. In respect of the three schools

of thought,—the Adwaita and the Visishtadwaita and the Dwaita he said: "The Adwaita is the last word about realisation. It is something to be felt in Samadhi, for it transcends mind and speech. The mind and intellect can comprehend and put in terms of language the range of thought up to the Visishtadwaita and no further. In its perfection, the Absolute and the Manifestation are seen to be equally real—the Lord's name, His abode and He himself are found to be composed of one spiritual substance. Everything is spiritual, varying only in form. For the ordinary man with strong attachment to the senses, the dualistic forms of religion, with some amount of material support, such as music and symbols are useful." (Life of Sri Ramakrishna pages 345, 346).

Even more essentially Indian than the social teachings and the spiritual teachings of Sri Ramakrishna is the nature of his influence. Swami Vivekananda has said well: "Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, so has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world." Sri Ramakrishna's influence was equally subtle, equally potent, equally fascinating. By simple and homely sayings, by Puranic parables, and by his illustrations taken from everyday life, he brought home the highest truths to even the humblest men. At the same time even the greatest pundits felt their learning to be a mere show by the side of the depth and profundity of his realisations and declarations of the truths of life.

Thus in every way Sri Ramakrishna was one of the most perfect incarnations of the Indian genius. His most distinctive contributions to Indian thought were his declaration of the harmony of religions, his proclamation that religion is realisation, and his emphasis on the Motherhood of God. In short Indian culture is Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramakrishna is Indian culture. P. C. Muzumdar says about him: "A living evidence of the depth and sweetness of Hindu religion is this good and holy man. He has wholly controlled his flesh. It is full of soul, full of the reality of religion, full of joy, full of blessed purity. As a Siddha Hindu ascetic he is a witness of the falsehood and emptiness of the world. His witness appeals to the profoundest heart of every Hindu."

His greatest disciple Swami Vivekananda says about him: "It (his life) is an extraordinary search-light under whose illumination one is able to understand the whole scope of the Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge we get from the Shastras. He showed by his life what the Rishis and the Avatars really wanted to teach. Books teach mere theories. He was

a realisation. In one life of fifty four years he lived the eight thousand years of national spiritual life and raised himself as an object-lesson to future generations."

Such was Sri Ramakrishna and such his work for India and for the world. Has the world need of him to-day? Does the proud and progressive West need his ministry? Does India now sweeping into the sunshine of modern life require his ministry? It seems to me that the West as well as the East need his ministry very much indeed. What is the plight of the West to-day? By science, industries, commerce and organisation the West has attained a position of enviable preeminence in the world in recent times. The great English poet-laureate of the nineteenth century was fired by the greatness of the age and sang in his enraptured youth:

"For I dipt into the future, for as human eye could see
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer and the battle flags
were furled

In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world.
There the commonsense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."

He kept the dreams of his youth bright and burnished to a large extent even after sixty years, though the very source and fount of the day of his hope was dashed with wandering isles of night.

"When the schemes and all the system, kingdoms and republics
fall
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?
All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love and Truth
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?
All diseases quench'd by science, no man halt, or deaf or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?
Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not earth as yet so young?
Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion killed,
Every green ravine a garden, every blazing desert tilled,
Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all Her warless isles."

How were these dreams fulfilled,—the bright dreams of science-aided, democracy-dominated, progress-uplifted nineteenth century? The Great War of twentieth century was the bitter answer to such a buoyant interrogation? We can try to explain away everything in our fatuous self-delusion. But universal world-wars cannot be explained

away by self-deluding sophistries. Rabindranath Tagore once referred to "the fierce self-idolatry of nation worship". You cannot organise for war and yet outlaw war. The religion of power was dominant for many decades and drove out the religion of peace. But it is now recognised that the religion of peace was the higher faith and that a new arrival is not always nobler than the speeded guest. Further, the Western life is getting complicated and sophisticated and standardised and unacademised almost beyond the point of human endurance. Hurry, speed, individualism, excitement, strenuousness are good but they could be easily overdone. The newspapers, the cinema, and the wireless concert are here, there, and everywhere. If the incidents of life increase, the accidents of life increase as well; the heavy toll of the automobile has outdistanced the fabled toll of the car of Jagannath. Even a holiday, a week-end rest, is enjoyed in a rush. At this rate the West will end in nerve-wreckage and neurasthenia if the warnings of nature and of God are unheeded and ignored. In the industrial world there is no God but competition and the company-promoter is his only prophet. Man is become an adjunct of machinery. The eye is pained by the universal ugliness; the ear is deafened by the din and uproar of turning wheels; the nose is filled with smoke which hangs like a pall over cities shutting out equally earth and sky; the hand is limp from incessant labour; and the head is overwhelmed by the rust of things and the heart is deadened by competition. Great minds have complained in recent times about the drawbacks of this age of advertisements. The newspapers and the city walls are over-decorated and over-weighted with puffing lies. There are more patent medicines than unpatent diseases and yet the scourge of epidemics is looming over the heads of men. Society is ever on the brink of class wars and strikes and lock-outs are on an unprecedented scale. Syndicalism, Bolshevism and Anarchism are raising their heads everywhere. Woman also has entered into the gladiatorial arena of life. The hotel is threatening to displace the home. Even in the happy realms of art passivism and cubism and jazz are in the ascendant. In the realm of ethical life the passion for comfort has supplanted the ancient views of poverty. Professor James says: "We have grown literally afraid to be poor."

In short life sadly needs serenity, simplicity, spaciousness, and spirituality. But fortunately for all the creative elements in life are beginning to prevail over the possessive elements. The saving grace of humour is yet keeping life sane and sweet. The reign of philanthropy over men's hearts is more and more. The disarmament conferences and the league of nations show the in-coming of the reign of

peace. The vogue of Tagore shows that art will once more be creative, serene, radiant, and revelatory of God. A re-born West will recreate the East. Sri Ramakrishna's greatest disciple Swami Vivekananda electrified the West and ushered the new dawn there. Is it too much claim that Sri Ramakrishna's influence will improve and uplift and purify and spiritualise the West ?

India's need of Sri Ramakrishna is even more. India is now "Twixt two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born". I would rather say, "Twixt two worlds, one dying, the other struggling to be born". Shall we preserve and revitalise the dying old world and shall we help at the birth of the new world or not ? That is the problem before us. Where are we to-day ? We have the sorrows of civilisation without its joys. Our towns and cities are crowded yet colourless, deafening yet drab and dirty, sophisticated yet lacking in splendour. Our villages are depleted, deserted, dying. We have complicated our petty round of life until we have the discomforts without the delights of modern life. The *hartsals* of life are more frequent and more in evidence than the harmonies of life. Every wandering globe-trotter feels an inner urge to abuse us and advise us. Miss Mayo has told us in her notorious book *Mother India* that we are occupying "a sub-grade of resistance" and has informed the world that "inertia, helplessness, lack of initiative and originality, weakness of life-vigour itself - all are traits that truly characterise the India not only of to-day but of long-past history". We were never inert, helpless, weak and lifeless and we are not so to day. But have we not got much to do to-day to maintain and revivify our ideals of life here and hereafter ? Has not our education been empty of liveliness and godliness ? Are we not restless and unhappy ? Has there not been a lowering of our idealism ? Is not our Indian-ness of outlook getting less ? Are we not becoming increasingly outlandish in speech, dress, customs, manners, and even institutions ? Are our ancient ideals of holy living and holy dying (*dharma-charana and antimasmyiti*) not on the wane ? Is there not a gathering and anxious impatience of discipline ? Are not social discords and deformations and revolts getting the upper hand ? Is not cynicism on the increase ? Are we not avid of pleasure and miserable at pleasure denied ? Hinduism and Hindu social life are between two fires—revolts from within and assaults from without. Have not strange faiths come in or been born here which advertise themselves as an amalgam of superscience and super religion and threaten to supplant our immemorial and universal religion ? Urbanisation, sophistication, star 'ardisation, and materialisation are ever on the increase in

modern India as elsewhere in the modern world. "We have given our hearts away: a sordid boon." We have to win the boons of science, we have to modernise ourselves wisely and well in the realms of industries, commerce, and political life; and at the same time we have to preserve our ideals of individual and family life, our co-operative social life, our idealistic literature and art, and our sublime philosophy and religion. We are in the sunshine of a great renaissance; we are full of a deep passion for social service and social concord; and we are on the eve of great political reforms in the direction of Swaraj and Self-determination. India who was once the Mother of the nations became a Niobe among the nations and is now regarded as a Sphinx among the nations casting wistful and tantalised and tantalising eyes across the desert spaces of her life. Shall she not become the Mother of the Nations once again? I wish, not in a spirit of weakness or selfishness, that Sri Ramakrishna should be born again to achieve such a glorious destiny for our land. In famous parable of the three men who scaled the wall and saw the glorious garden, two of whom leapt into the garden but the third restrained his rapture and came back to the joyless world to lead them unto the Eden of the soul, he has shown to us his yearning for re-birth for achieving the greater glory of God and the greater happiness of men. May he lead us into the higher life that is to be for India—our benign and beautiful and blessed motherland!

I say again that such a claim is not an immoderate and overstated claim. Sister Nivedita once said: "His was probably the one universal mind of modern times." Swami Vivekananda has shown that "in one life of fifty-four years he lived the eight thousand years of national spiritual life". Let us place ourselves under the lead of this supreme lover of humanity and this supreme incarnation of the Indian genius.

"Ramakrishna! thou shouldst be living at this hour!
 The world hath need of thee; she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient hard-won dower
 Of inward happiness; we are selfish men:
 Oh raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a store and dwelt apart;
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;

So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay."

Sisters and Brothers, I have done. In the beautiful poem with which this address began is found a beautiful utterance with which I can fittingly conclude this address :

" Lo ! Thou hast shown that all paths lead to the Father ;
That the earnest seeker will attain to realization, to conscious at-
one-ment with God.

' As surety sure ' hast thou shown us that the only essential is
one-pointed devotion in the search for truth.

Naught else matters—nor race nor clime nor caste nor creed nor
prince nor peasant nor poverty nor riches nor ignorance nor
learning.

All these are but outer. Devotion is inner—of the heart.

Whatsoever the path, the soul who follows it in spirit and in
truth will surely attain to God-consciousness.

We have been shown that the Pearl of Great Price which we
seek is within ourselves, because we are one with Thee and
Thou art one with the Father.

The veil which separates us from Thee is a veil of illusion only.
By thy life among men didst thou show how to pierce this veil,
and to become consciously one with God, the Father-Mother
of all the myriads of manifested universes."

आचंडालाप्रतिहृतरयः यस्य प्रमप्रवाहः
लोकातीतोऽप्यहह न जहौ लोककल्याणमार्गम् ।
तैलोक्येऽप्यप्रतिहतमहिमा जानक्रीप्राणबन्धः
भक्त्या ज्ञानं वृतवरबपूः सीतया यो हि रामः ॥
स्तब्धीकृत्वा प्रलयंकलितं बाहवोत्यं महान्तं
हित्वा दूरं प्रकृतिसहजामन्धतामिस्त्रिमिश्रां ।
गीतं शान्तं मधूरमपि यः सिंहनादं जगर्जं
सोयं जातः प्रथितपुरुषः रामकृष्णस्त्विदानीं ॥

May I recite here my verse-translation of these two beautiful stanzas ?

" Sri Rama whose sweet stream of life did flow
In its pellucid and resistless might
To bless and save the lowest of the low
The victim of the world's most sinful slight :—
He whose compassion deep did make him wear

The world-stained garment of the human frame
 To show the Godward way and gladly bear
 A human life and veil His power's bright flame:—
 He whose renown doth know no peer on earth
 Or in bright paradise—the good life's goal—;
 The radiant blossom of whose blessed birth
 Was Sita's love and who was Sita's soul:—
 Incarnate Wisdom dowered with heavenly might
 In blessed union with Devotion sweet
 That wore the forming Sita, as the light
 Of Sun is in deep union with its heat ;
 Sri Krishna who did quell the restless deep
 Of battling arimes met in mortal war
 Whose Love's Sun o'er the darkness and the sleep
 Of nature shone from Partha's golden car :
 The heavenly Lion whose roar did ne'er cause
 The slightest fear or grief to all around
 But gave in music sweet God's holy laws
 By knowing which the soul with joy is crowned :—
 Sri Ram and Krishna full of love supreme
 To bless the world did take a single frame,
 And brought from Heaven's Love's Ganga's sacred stream
 And bore Sri Ramakrishna's holy name.
 Glory to Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna. Guru Maharajki Jai.

(Concluded)

EMERSON'S DEBT TO THE ORIENT

By Prof. Arthur E. Christy of the New York University

I

For decades Americans have spoken of Emerson as a Boston Brahmin without much thought of peculiar nicety with which the appellation fits. Some have vague ideas of a general analogy between transcendentalism and Hinduism, but the extent to which the former was dependent upon the latter for inspiration, imagery and doctrine has rarely been studied even by scholars.

It is generally accepted that transcendentalism was compounded of English idealism, German intuitionism, and Oriental immanence. It is also accepted that the various Platonic schools of thought held a potent influence on Emerson. And much has been written in the past on all phases of Emerson's mind, save his acceptance of the doctrine

of Oriental immanence. There, is the greatest dearth of information. The story of what a strong man indubitably sincere and a genius, did with the ancient thought of Asia is one of the most fascinating narratives of the human mind and literary history.

At what age and by what means was Emerson first drawn into contact with the philosophies of Asia? What did he think of them? What did he read? How was his interest nourished? And finally what did Emerson accept of the declarations of Upanishadic seers regarding life and religion? The following is an attempt to answer these questions.

II

Emerson very probably came to associate the sacred writers of the East with those of the Platonic schools through his adoption of the critical attitude of the French philosopher Cousin, whose works he read. Cousin had written: "The roots of Greece and Rome are absolutely Oriental. Language, writing, the alphabet, processes of industry and agriculture, mechanical arts, primitive forms of Government, the primitive processes and characters of art, and the primitive forms of religion, all, all are Oriental.....When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, especially those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discern there so many truths, and truths so profound and standing in so strong a contrast with those mean results which, in these latter days, have satisfied European genius that we are tempted to bow the knee before the genius of the East, and see in that cradle of mankind, the true home of philosophy!"

It was the concept of unity that appealed to Emerson in Orientalism. Early in life he had written in his Journals, "An obscure and slender thread of truths runs through all mythologies, and this might lead to the highest regions of philosophy."

To Emerson the Vedas and the Koran were Scriptures just as sacred as the Hebrew Bible. His was not the dogmatist's pose of infallibility. And one could go on, culling out passage after passage, some of which speak of Occidental natural science in terms of Hinduism. "All science is transcendental or else passes away. Botany is now acquiring the right theory—the avatars of Brahma will presently be the text books of natural history." Nature is the same in India as in America, the basis of universal life. God is all and in all and eternal. All that is not of the infinite source is ephemeral and will vanish. This was Emerson's faith. Let it be repeated, he was eclectic in sympathy and his philosophy was composed largely of Oriental doctrines.

Before turning from the spirit with which Emerson approached the Eastern writings, one final passage which summarizes his bias better than any other should be presented here. "Yes, the Zoroastrian, the Indian, the Persian scriptures are majestic, and more to our daily purpose than this year's almanac or this day's newspaper.....I owed—my friend and I owed—a magnificent day to the Bhagavat Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and another climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us. Let us now go back and supply minute criticism to it, but cherish the venerable oracle."

III

No very certain proof has ever been given of the time when Emerson first came under the influence of Orientalism. In a letter, Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson wrote: "I think that I remember dimly that even while in college his letters show that he had at least read extracts from them (the East Indian Scriptures), probably in some Englishman's account of India." In the Journal of 1845 he writes, "The East is grand and makes Europe appear the land of trifles." But five years previous to this, in the summer of 1840, he had written in a letter to a friend: "In the sleep of the great heats there is nothing for me but to read the Vedas, the Bible of the tropics, which I find I come back upon every three or four years. It is sublime as heat and night and breathless ocean." When this passage was entered upon the pages of his note books, Emerson was twenty-seven years of age. It may never be possible to determine entirely just what books he read during his college years, but there is every evidence that his curiosity was alive and his knowledge of India and his faiths profound.

The first positive knowledge that we have of Emerson's reading translations of Indian works themselves comes from the Journal of 1882, when Emerson was nineteen years of age. He concluded several pages of remarks on God, which expressed a rather youthful monistic faith, not yet full-blown but clearly indicating the course of his mind, by saying, "I know nothing more fit to conclude the remarks which have been made in the last pages than certain fine pagan strains.

".....Of dew-bespangled leaves and blossoms bright,
Hence! vanish from my sight,
Delusive pictures, unsubstantial shows,
My soul absorbed, one only Being knows,

Of all perceptions, one abundant source,
 Hence every object, every moment flows,
 Suns hence derive their force,
 Hence planets learn their course ;
 But suns and fading worlds I view no more,
 God only I perceive, God only I adore ! ”

Emerson's Brahminism was nourished by the sacred books of the East. The parallels in transcendentalism and Hinduism were not accidental.

IV

The literary use which Emerson made of this wide reading is fascinating. The two poems, *Brahma* and *Hamatreya*, are generally and rightly considered to be the crystallization of the Oriental forces in his thinking. *Brahma* appeared in the first number of the *Atlantic monthly* in November, 1857, and read as follows :

Song of the Soul (Brahma)

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
 Or if the slain thinks he is slain,
 They know not well the subtle ways,
 I keep, and pass and turn again.
 Far or forgot to me is near ;
 Shadow and sunlight are the same,
 The vanished gods not less appear ;
 And one to me are shame and fame.
 They reckon ill who leave me out ;
 When me they fly, I am the wings ;
 I am the doubter and the doubt,
 And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.
 The strong gods pine for my abode,
 And pine in vain the Sacred Seven ;
 But thou, meek lover of the good !
 Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

We cannot here enter an extended exposition of the poem *Hamatreya* which is next in importance, in showing Emerson's indebtedness to Hindu works. Several lines in the poem *Celestial Love* afford in their symbolism, close analogy, if not proof that they were based on Vedic writings.

“ In a region where the wheel
 On which all beings ride
 Visibly revolves ;
 Where the starred eternal worm

Girds the world with bound and term ;
 Where unlike things are alike ;
 Where good and ill
 And joy and moan,
 Melt into one."

V

It is exceedingly difficult to determine whether Emerson actually believed in the doctrine of transmigration as literally as the Hindus. If he did not accept the doctrine literally and in toto, at least he always considered it worthy of mention.

It is in Emerson's doctrine of the " Over-Soul " that the closest philosophical affinity may be found with the Hindu Vedanta. Numerous men have already pointed out that the word itself is a literal translation of a synonymous Sanskrit term. Emerson regarded matter as the negative manifestation of the Universal Spirit. It has its life and development through the direct immanence of the Absolute. And in like manner, Mind is an expression of the Universal Spirit in its positive power. Man himself is nothing but the Universal Spirit present in a material organism. Man is of the Divine, lives in the Divine, and in every power he manifests he shows the Divine life within. The soul is not a separate individuality but " part and parcel of God." In reality, Emerson says, " the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all organs ; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet ; is not a faculty but a light ; is not the intellect or the will, but master of the intellect and the will ; is the background of our being in which they lie—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within and from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, that the light is all."

The Indian Vedanta repudiates the conception of the creation which implies, first, a creation out of nothing, and secondly, the separation of the Creator from His Creation, and which, finally, in this implication, leaves unexplained the organic growth and development of the Universe. The Vedantins maintain that nature is not created but begotten with the elements of life and growth inherent in it, no external impulse being necessary for its development. The whole cosmos is a living organism—one life pervading all and connecting all, from the highest to the lowest order of beings, in such defined relations to each other as to show intelligence and purpose. The Bhagavat Gita expresses it in saying that all are " threaded on the Lord, as jewels on a string."

In Emerson's essay of that title it is in the *Over-Soul* that "every man's particular being is contained and made one with all others—and man is the facade of this temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide." And again, "we live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meanwhile within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty to which every part and particle is equally related; the Eternal One. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beautitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one. We see the world, piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts is the soul."

Whole passages from the *Over-Soul* might be supplanted by passages from the Upanishads and their relevancy be unaffected. Take the following from the Chandogya Upanishad and note its resemblance to the concluding passage above. "Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, that is the finite. The infinite is Immortal, the finite is mortal."

The soul within man is God and cannot err. Indeed, "man stands at the point betwixt the inward spirit and outer matter. He sees that one explains and translates the other: that the world is the mirror of the soul. He is the priest and interpreter of Nature thereby."

An inquirer might well ask, then, of the source of this outward matter, and we have the answer in the poem *Woodnotes* where Emerson says,

"Ever fresh the broad creation,
A divine improvisation,
From the heart of God proceeds,
A single will, a million deeds.
Once slept the world, an egg of stone,
And pulse, and sound, and light was none;
And God said, throb, and there was motion,
And the vast mass, became vast ocean....."

Emerson's use of the Hindu metaphor in the line "Once slept the world, an egg of stone" again shows how he borrowed from the Vedas. For in the Chandogya Upanishad we read, "In the beginning this world was merely non-being. It was existent. It developed.

It turned into an egg. It lay for the period of a year. It was split asunder. One of the two eggshell parts became silver, one gold. That which was of silver is this earth. That which was of gold is he sky. What was the outer membrane is the mountains. What was the inner membrane is cloud and mist. What were the veins are the rivers. What was the fluid within is the ocean."

VI

Emerson was an evolutionist—to the extent that one of his critics has raised the question of how he could be an evolutionist and at the sametime a mystic. Briefly, Emerson's concept of evolution must be thought of in terms of emanation. This is highly suggestive of the modern theory of evolution. It implies that Brahma, through the laws of its own being, throws itself into manifestations of itself. The Hindus illustrate this idea by the similes of a spider and its web, the hair and nails growing on an animate body, the sea and its waves and foam, the sun and its rays playing on the rippling water. But in doing so the Hindu does not predicate that what is thus let out is separated from Brahma, which is designated its cause. He recognizes an identity of existence in the effect and its cause, the subject and the object. The effect is always latent in the cause; the cause is identical with effect. Now let Emerson speak. "The world seems very simple and easily dispatched.....There are but two things, or but one thing and its shadow.....Cause and Effect, and Effect is itself worthless if separated from Cause. It is Cause still that must be worshipped in Effect, so that it is only one thing. The worship of Effect is Idolatry.'

In summary, what the Hindus and Emerson obviously repudiated was the conception of creation, which implied, first, a creation out of nothing, and secondly, the separation of the Creator from his creation, and which thirdly, in this implication, left unexplained the organic growth and development of the universe.

Finally, Emerson wrote, "I am primarily engaged to myself to be a public servant to all the gods, to demonstrate to all men that there is intelligence and good will at the heart of things, and higher and higher leadings." Surely, then, the sage of Concord, Massachusetts, who was the public servant to the gods of the Vedas and the Hindus *was* a Brahmin. And the world has seen a man in whom the East met the West in a happy synthesis.*

*Reprinted from the *Monist* in an abridged form.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The 93rd Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Sri Sharada Ashrama, Ponnampet, Coorg, on the 28th of April last with great fervour and devotion. The presence of Srimat Nirmalanandaji Maharaj, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, and a few other Swamis of the Order was a source of great inspiration to the local public.

The Day was also observed by the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samity Godhra, Gujarat, early in April last. Swami Viswananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay, who was present on the occasion delivered some interesting lectures on "Nature of Hinduism", "Universal Religion", etc. Among many eminent speakers Mr. Zibauddin Ahmed, M. A., L. L. B., Superintendent of Police, Panch Mahals, highly impressed by the Swami, evinced great zeal for Vedanta and spoke that it was Vedanta alone which could give to all the eternal life and bring heaven on earth. Devotional songs and poor-feeding formed some of the other aspects of the Utshava.

The Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, for 1926, shows a good record of works. The Ashrama carried relief to about 30,000 people and extended medical aid to over 9412 new cases during the year under review. The Ashrama suffered a good deal from the devastating flood of 1924. A well equipped Dispensary, a general ward for male indoor patients and a cholera and pox ward are its immediate wants. In view of its growing usefulness as a philanthropic institution in the heart of one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage in India, the Ashrama deserves immediate financial help from the large-hearted people and we doubt not that the public would respond to the appeal.

AN APPEAL.

Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work, Bankura, Bengal.

From the Government Gazette as well as from our previous appeals published in the newspapers, the public are aware of the acute famine conditions prevailing in the Bankura Districts. We have sent there a batch of workers and a relief centre has been started already in the famine-stricken area. Extreme scarcity of drinking water has added to the gravity of the situation. The people of Bankura are proverbially poor and unstinted generosity of the public can alone save them from this dire calamity.

With the humble means at its disposal, the Ramakrishna Mission has begun work in about a dozen villages. The local authorities have been affording us facilities as far as possible. Our resources are too scanty to cope with the situation. Our appeal goes, in the name of the suffering people, to the benevolent public, to help us with donations and contributions, which however small, will be thankfully received and duly acknowledged. All contributions in cash or kind may be sent to any of the following addresses.

1. President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O., Howrah—District.
2. Manager, Udbodhan, 1. Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
3. Manager, Advaita Ashram, 182-A, Muktaram Babu Street, Calcutta.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

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PRAYER



त्वं शुद्धबोधोऽसि हि सर्वदेहिनामा
त्मास्यधीशोऽसि निगकृतिः स्वयम् ।
प्रतीयसे ज्ञानदृशां महामते
पादाब्जभृङ्गाद्वितसंगसंगिनाम् ॥
अहम् प्रपन्नोऽस्मि पादांबुजं प्रभो
भवापवर्गे तव योगिभावितम् ।
यथाज्ञसाज्ञानमपाग्वारिधिं
मुखं तरिष्यामि तयातुशायि माम् ॥

Oh Lord, the Intellect supreme, Thou one undivided Consciousness, the Atman and the Master of all, the formless Reality, Thou revealest Thyself to those pure-hearted souls who like the bee have their mind ever fixed upon the lotus of Thy sacred Feet.

Oh Lord, Thy holy Feet do the Yogins ever meditate upon ; and verily this severs all shackles that bind man to the earth. Do Thou show unto me, Oh God, the way by which I may soon cross this shoreless ocean of ignorance (world) with ease. And with this one desire, my Lord, do I seek shelter in Thee.

ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(Some Stray Talks)

I

Samadhi is mainly of two kinds, Savikalpa (ecstatic state of dual consciousness) and Nirvikalpa (undifferentiated state of consciousness). In the Nirvikalpa Samadhi a man loses all knowledge of name and form, and the whole world vanishes into nothingness before his eyes. In the Cossipore Garden, Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) attained the Nirvikalpa Samadhi but very few could know of it, for he could suppress such things so much. There is yet another kind of Samadhi called Ananda Samadhi. In this the mind enjoys such a huge amount of ecstatic joy that the body can ill afford to hold it and as a consequence the Brahma-Randhra (or the gate of the body in the crown) gives way. In this blissful state of consciousness, the body lasts three weeks at best, and no longer.

Men visualise God in different forms, Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic according to the predominance of one or other of these three substances which they are made of. What a pity it is that instead of trading in this priceless merchandise, people bargain for paltry worldly things. Men must cultivate the habit of remembering and thinking on God constantly, for nothing but God have they to call their own and they have to realise this truth in their own life.

The natural bent of the ordinary human mind is to gravitate towards enjoyment, but that must be given an upward turn. Sri Ramakrishna's mind ever soared in the region of bliss supreme, and specially during his Sadhana in the Panchavati, (at Dakshineswar) it reached to such a high pitch that his time passed off quite unnoticed, himself totally losing all appetite for food and drink. But, since his

body had to be preserved so the man who waited upon the Master, would thrust a morsel of rice into his mouth whenever he seemed to come a little down from the exalted state of bliss in which he ever remained. In this way in the course of the whole day and night, the Master was made to swallow some seven or eight morsels of rice at the highest computation. (Much later when we met the Master) even then we marked that he had to bring his mind down to the physical plane by force.

One day in the course of his spiritual ministration the Master spoke at length about the Shabda Brahman (or the manifestation of the Brahman as sound). And this was the subject of my noontide meditation in the Panchavati, and lo ! suddenly I had the vision revealed unto me : I heard the birds on the trees around sing the Divine Vedic lore.

On one occasion Sri Ramakrishna said : "One day as I was meditating in the Kali Temple, in a vision I saw the screens of Maya (ignorance) disappearing one after another from my sight. Another day, Mother held before my eyes a flood of light surpassing in effulgence and splendour a million suns, and out of that luminous mass I saw a form purely of the nature of consciousness emerge slowly out only to melt away into the same the next moment." How the formless here assumed form and the form lost itself in the formless !

One day entering into the Kali Temple K. began to admonish the Mother in a violent tone,—his chest becoming red and tears trickling down from the eyes in great anger. Sri Ramakrishna who had all this time been staying inside the Temple, perceiving his tone, came out and said : "True, temper can be shown to our near and dear ones ; but yours is a very difficult attitude (Birabhava or the attitude of a lord to his consort). Mine is Matribhava (i.e. the attitude of a son to the mother).

Human body is the greatest temple of God: For this reason the Scriptures enjoin that meditation and worship should be performed within the body; and in this body is the Shahashrara (the thousand-petalled lotus in the head i.e. the upper brain) from where the mind does not ordinarily come down if once it ascends there. It is for this reason that the Scriptures again say: "When in the Ratha is seen the Bamana all rebirth stops;" which means that in this very body (Ratha) resides God (Bamana) and realising Him therein man escapes the repeated cycles of birth and death. In this body did Ramaprasad see the Lord, the Father and Mother of all, and instantly sang, 'Thou abidest in this body, Oh Mother, and herein do I see Thee etc.'

There is moreover a third eye or the eye of Knowledge in this body on the forehead between the eye-brows. When it opens, one sees, as Sri Ramakrishna has said, everything blissful and happy around him. What is true of the Macrocosm is true of the Microcosm. How wonderful it is that God is so near us! Verily, if a man can realise Him once and have a taste of the Bliss Divine, he shall forthwith lose all taste for everything else. The temples, cars and chariots that are used in external worship are but symbols of the greatest temple of God (human body), requisite only for the spiritual noviciates.

II

A King lives in his palace within seven gates. A poor man begs of the Minister for the royal interview and his prayer is granted. The minister leads him through the gates to the royal presence. Now, finding an officer richly dressed and stationed at each gate the man asks his guide if he (officer) were the King; but everytime the answer is in the negative. When they enter the seventh gate, at the sight of the exquisite beauty and grandeur of the royal King the man at once recognises him as such

and asks the minister no more. Similar is the case with the Guru: like unto the minister the Guru leads the disciple through different stages till he joins him with the Lord.

And no Guru is greater than one's own mind. You will see that when your mind is made steady through meditation it will dictate from within what you are to do and which way to follow. Even in your daily duties it will show what is to be done first and what next. Thus it will lead you onward till the Goal is reached.

You can develop your mind and make it steady in either of the two ways—by making the mind absolutely unsusceptible to any change through concentration and meditation by retiring to a solitary retreat or by continually thinking of good thoughts, and developing love and attachment towards God. The mind is just like a milch cow which gives a larger supply when fed well. Give the mind more food and you will find it giving you better service in return. And what constitutes the food of the mind?—Surely it consists of meditation and concentration, prayer and worship and the like. There is a class of Sadhaka who let loose their mind and keep a strong watch over its movements. The mind, after roaming here and there, nowhere finds the lasting peace and consequently turns back to God and takes refuge in Him. The thing is if you look after the mind, the mind will also look after you. This being the case it only behoves you that you should keep a vigilant eye over the movements of the mind and analyse them with the utmost care and scrutiny. And for the analysis of mental movements no place is more suitable than a solitary retirement. It is for this purpose that the Rishis of old would always 'select' the Himalayan retreats and the banks of the Ganges for carrying on their spiritual practices. Anyhow the mind is to be purged of all attachment; it must be made transparent or it shall not be able to catch the reflection of

God upon it. True renunciation consists in giving up all attachment for worldly objects to which the mind is ever bound. When the mind is once freed from this shackle, it shall not be affected in the least even though it is placed in the midst of numberless objects of sense-enjoyment. Hence the utility of struggle. A man who has no struggle in his life is simply lifeless. But he who bravely faces any struggle that may come in his way shall have the reward of an everlasting peace, vouchsafed to him at the 'next step'.

The most congenial time for meditation is the time of Samyama; and this is just the hour when the day closes and night commences and the night closes and day breaks. This time the nature is calm and equipoised. This is the reason why early-rising forms an essential factor in the religious life of a man. At this time the Shusumna Nadi (the central nerve within the spinal cord) sets itself to work and consequently breath blows through both nostrils unlike the usual course which is generally through one only—either the Ida or the Pingala (the two Vagi nerves, right and left; or the 'sun' and the 'moon', as they are called in the Yogic literature) and disturbs the mind. Certain Yogins always look for the time when the Shusumna will function and when it is actually in work they will at once sit for meditation leaving aside all works which they may be engaged in at that time.

Man wants peace; but how can he expect it unless he can establish a close intimacy with God and make Him his own and unless in the mental world he can hold intercourse with Him—feed Him, dress Him and behave with Him sweetly and cordially just as he does with his near and dear ones, his friends and relatives in this physical plane? And to effect this mental attitude the easiest course is to think and contemplate constantly on Him; it is therefore known as the simplest of all Sadhanas. Mysterious is the way of God. He is infinite and finite

withal : He also incarnates Himself in the human form. Who can understand Him? Bhusandi, the Crow (of superhuman power) at first took Ramachandra for an ordinary being, but unable to procure any shelter in the three worlds (heaven, earth and the nether world, when chased by the unseen Hand of Rama) at last recognised Him as God incarnate and prayed. Many and varied are the paths through which God leads man; and no body knows through which path he will be led. He sometimes leads him through the thorny path, while at other times the soft, rosy ones. The one course open to man is therefore to resign himself wholly to His Feet; and verily, this is the only way out.

The body, mind and the senses all become 'low' and benumbed through the debasing influence of Maya. "Ensnared in the trap of the five elements (Maya)", says Sri Ramakrishna, "the Brahman Himself weeps and laments." Such is Maya! But to a man who has first realised God with the greatest care has transcended, once for all, Her deluding charms and attractions, and a thousand worlds cannot do the least harm to him. Such a man is beyond the bounds of Maya, and to such a one alone are revealed Her mysteries. Under the delusion of this divine Maya, man cannot comprehend how terribly painful and troublesome it is to be born and live in this world. The whole body is decaying day by day, and still he is forgetful of the sacred mission for which he has taken this human birth. But inspite of the troubles and tribulations of life here on this earth, the human birth has a unique advantage of its own. It is in this birth that a being can realise God. Therefore without paying much heed to the ease and comforts of this frail form, man should do here such meritorious works that shall have a lasting effect hereafter and shall terminate the repeated cycles of birth and death. Indeed, for mental peace one is to invoke peacelessness and this is what the wise say.

A CALL FOR HINDU-MOSLEM UNITY

Every nation has its periods of rise and fall, decadence and prosperity, and India is not an exception to the truth of this historical phenomenon. During the palmy days of her independence, the multitudinous races of the outside world found a welcome refuge in the catholic fold of her culture, and in the process of time they became so inextricably blended up with the people of India, and their destiny became so closely interlinked with that of the children of the soil that they recognised the land as their motherland, and fought and died when necessary to uphold her prestige and glory. But times have changed, and Indian history now tells a different tale. The Hindus and the Mahommedans—the two sister communities in India—have lived for centuries together in mutual amity and peace; but as ill luck would have it, at this unhappy moment of our decadence when greater unity and synthesis between the two are of imperious necessity to work together for national regeneration, they are breaking their heads one against the other like so many Kilkenny cats! Never before did India present a spectacle of greater moral and spiritual stagnation than at this hour of political and economic helplessness. The sleeping crater inactive for so many centuries has burst forth in all its suddenness and intensity, and the whole of India is now inundated with the lava-flood of communal rancour, bigotry and fanaticism. The rosy dream of a full-fledged Indian nation reared up on the sound basis of Hindu-Moslem unity seems to be vanishing away like the ephemeral dews of a sunny morn. In fact the bloody fratricidal feuds now raging in many parts of the country seem to be the greatest of all the calamities, that have hitherto chequered the annals of India inasmuch as they cut at the very root of national solidarity and spell the ultimate stagnation of the synthetic activities of Indian life.

With the advent of the Western people the tide of our national life has taken a different turn. The economic exploitation of India coupled with her political helplessness, has brought about a woeful change in the entire outlook of her people. The influx of materialistic culture has, all the more, aggravated the situation, and no body knows to what depths of demoralisation

India would go down if the ever-widening gulf of difference between the Hindus and the Mohammedans be not bridged over, all at once, and a combined effort be not launched to stem the tide of the mutual antipathy that is running rampant in this hapless land. Dependence is limitation; and limitation stifles the spontaneous growth of every living organism. If the progress of a nation or a race is to be measured by the freedom it has achieved in the domains of religion and politics as well as by the cosmic consciousness of brotherhood and nationalism it has developed in the light of its pristine idealism and glorious cultural traditions, the body-politic of India, it must be admitted, has suffered a tremendous set-back during the last century and a half. The industrial life of India has been practically paralysed, and there is no knowing when she would again come back to her own. The intellectual imbecility is but another spoke to the grinding wheel of national catastrophe. Moreover, persons are not wanting here, who in their eagerness to enjoy a mess of pottage are disowning their own cultural history and lofty spiritual ideal, and disclosing a shameful spirit of weak-kneed servility before the banner of triumphant Occidentalism. And to crown all, the neo-philosophy of "the music and the cow" has cropped up in "this fertile soil" of India to spell the speedy extinction of the budding Indian nationalism! One really cries in the agony of heart :—Is there no way out of this welter of chaos and confusion, from this fraternal feud and bloody broil? Is there no room for the rapid rapprochement of the Hindus and the Musulmans to ensure a solidarity so very essential for the well-being of the nation?

Islam like other great religions of the world has got a glorious history behind it in and outside India, however much we may stigmatise it as a stagnant religion in our ignorance of its real spirit and cultural achievements. The once-great Cordova of the Moors,—the beautiful bride of Andalusia; the princely city of Cairo of the Fatimides,—the splendid seat of Islamic culture; the Elysian Bagdad of the Abbasides,—the earthly paradise of dreamy splendour; the mighty achievements of Islamic genius in the domains of science and art, literature and medicine, though now buried in oblivion through 'the tyrannic claim of Time', even now, after so many silent centuries, excite the unstinted admiration of

the civilised world. Even modern Egypt and Persia, Turkey and Afganistan are pulsating with the accession of a new life, and the Muslims there are forging fresh rules of religious interpretation by appeals to the traditions of the Prophet to curb down blind orthodoxy. Strenuous efforts are being made outside India by eminent scholars and divines to liberate Islam from the "fetters of Authority, from the dead hand of the past Age". The Babi movement in Persia is an unmistakable sign of the spirit of the time. It has raised its war-cry against the petrified theology and outworn legal conceptions of the "Mullas", and has launched an attack upon their hypocrisy and worldliness. In fact everywhere there is a positive bid for the expansion of the social and religious, political and economic outlook of life among the followers of the Prophet. Even the history of India in the middle ages is not without the glorious assets of Islamic culture. The cultural synthesis of the Hindus and the Mohammedans attempted under the auspices of the rulers of the type of Akbar stands as a rebuke to the bitter spirit of communalism now driving a wedge between the two sister communities in India. The impact of the dynamic forces that are working phenomenal changes in the outside world has utterly failed to break down the thick wall of ultra-conservatism of the Indian Moslems. In fine, the followers of the Prophet have so much been shorn of their virile spirit of adaptability that their present stagnation seems to belie their pristine greatness as a ruling race in India.

The etiology of this deplorable phenomenon is not far to seek. The verdict of history that records the march of nations through the shining scores of centuries for the fulfilment of their respective roles in the great economy of nature, is undeniable and cannot be blinked at on a plea of sheer ignorance. It cannot be gainsaid that the political prostration of the Moslems coupled with their intellectual incapacity to march with the spirit of the times has contributed a great deal towards the narrowing down of their religious outlook. Their hatred for everything that is not countenanced by the Hadis or the Quran stood as a wall against any healthy progress and did not permit them, as a matter of fact, to take full advantage of the humanising aspects of material culture that began to flow into the stream of Indian life with the advent of the British; whereas the Hindus with their

spirit of adaptability and assimilative faculty attuned themselves to the spirit of the age and stole a march over their erstwhile rivals in the field of politics. The Moslems naturally began to feel the sting of humiliation and their vaunted idea of superiority over the Hindus, as being descendants of the Moslem rulers in India served only to stimulate the sense of racial animosity and stiffen their opposition to the progressive Hindu thought and culture. The extra-Indian direction of the hearts of the Indian Moslems towards Arabia, Persia, Syria and Egypt is, nonetheless, responsible for their lukewarm interest in the evolution of Indian political life on the basis of the Hindu-Moslem unity. Cut off from the liberalising influences of the outside world the Indian Moslems stagnated beyond measure within the narrow groove of communalism and thereby put a seal upon their career as a progressive element in the Indian soil.

Ignorance in most cases is the source of manifold troubles in the country. Every student of Islam must admit that compulsion in the matter of religion has never been inculcated in any Sura of the Quran. It has on the contrary "forbidden all believers to vilify those whom they call their gods and enjoined upon every Musulman to return mischief with virtue and fight even against his own co-religionists, if the latter intend to damage any place of worship". If Islamic theology is not to be understood as a collection of metaphysical and mysterious conundrum, if the religion of the Prophet is still to be recognised as a living and catholic faith, the Indian Muslims would do well to assimilate the liberal injunctions of the Quran in their true perspective and "humanise the brute in man and raise him to the divine precincts". Verily, rank ignorance of one's own religious precepts is responsible for much of the mischief that is very often done to the adherents of other faiths. It cannot be denied that some sort of *pact i. e.* an understanding on the basis of mutual concessions, is requisite to close up the ranks, but whether that will wed the aims and aspirations of both the communities to one great purpose, is still a matter of grave concern to many. The remedy lies not in studied ignorance but in the positive knowledge and assimilation of each other's culture. Communalism in educational institutions—the very sphere where the seed of real synthesis and unity should be

sown—has of late been another disintegrating factor in Indian life. It must be rooted out and opportunities must be offered both to the Hindu and Mohammedan students in the healthy atmosphere of educational institutions to dive deep into the spring of each other's civilisation. It is then and then alone that the forces of nationalism shall triumph over the forces of communalism. Rightly has Sreejut Subhas Chandra Bose remarked in course of his Presidential Address at the last Maharashtra Conference :—"India has a place for the Islam as for every other religion. It is necessary for different religious groups to be acquainted with the traditions, ideals and history of one another because cultural intimacy will pave the way towards communal peace and harmony. I venture to think that the fundamental basis of political unity between different communities lies in cultural rapprochement."

A learned Mohammedan writer while dilating on the Islamic ideals of education has boldly stated that Islamic education stands for "the principle of the unity of God, of the brotherhood of man, the ideal of the humble service of the less fortunate brethren, the principle of democracy and, above all, the ideal of service of the motherland". May we not reasonably ask what then is the difference between the Hindus and the Mohammedans if the former stand also for the very same principles? From time immemorial the stream of Hindu civilisation has rolled down the ages and fertilised many a soil with the springs of its universal ideals. The spiritual oneness of humanity,—the very basic principle of democracy and the brotherhood of man; the recognition of the potential divinity of man that lies at the bottom of the Hindu ideal of service; and, above all, the realisation of the transcendental nature of the Absolute Reality,—are but some of the splendid contributions of Hindu thought to the stock of human knowledge and culture. This cultural affinity if properly understood, should furnish a permanent basis of synthesis between the apparently conflicting ideals of the two mighty races of the world. In India the destinies of both have so inseparably been intertwined with each other that they have now no other alternative but to work out their common salvation and well-being by a joint and co-ordinated activity. Bullying is no more a paying concern nor will slaving bring any more grist to the mill.

"No civilisation can grow, unless fanaticism, bloodshed and brutality stop. No civilisation can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon one another and look kindly upon the religious convictions of others." The Mohammedans of India would do well to take a leaf out of the history of the religious life of the Hindus. "Throughout the vistas of the centuries of our national life, the one idea, 'Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti', (He who exists is one ; the sages call Him variously) comes down and has permeated the whole of our national existence. It is why our land has become the glorious land of religious toleration. It is here in India that Hindus have built and are still building churches for the Christians and mosques for the Mohammedans inspite of their hatred, inspite of their tyranny, inspite of the vile language they are given to uttering."

The whole world is now astir with a spirit of resurgence. Even the subject nations bound down with the octopus of political thralldom have felt the impact of a new life and are exerting themselves to break through the tentacles of foreign domination that have struck deep root into the soil of their national life. The history of this age unfolds a striking phenomenon of a mighty revolt—revolt of the oppressed and the downtrodden against the alien domination, a revolt of the spirit against brute force. The heroic struggle of the Muslim patriots in Turkey for their birth-right of liberty shall remain ever recorded in characters of gold in the annals of the world. Egypt, though now shorn of her pristine beauty and splendour is showing unmistakable signs of a new awakening, which are unfailing prognostications of a glorious future. The political horizon of China is now tinged with the crimson glow of the rising sun of Liberty and time is not far when it would attain to the plenitude of splendour in the welkin of Asia. But alas! India—the land of saints and savants, of heroes and heroines—the land that is covered with the trophies of honour and glory, and radiant with the halo of a hoary civilisation, has totally given the go-by to the sublime idealism of the past and is sunk in the quagmire of fraternal feud and suicidal antagonism! It is high time that both the Hindus and the Mohammedans should cast aside this stinking garbage of communalism and stand shoulder to shoulder in a combined effort to build up the mighty edifice of Indian national

life on the adamantine basis of cultural synthesis, mutual love and toleration. The points of similarity as already outlined far outnumber those of difference between the two communities, and at this hour of trial when the scattered energies of the nation should be marshalled up to counteract these baneful influences, we must accentuate those points of cultural similarity and minimise those of difference that have of late been the source of misunderstanding between the two. The tocsin of alarm has been sounded many times by the far-sighted patriots of this land and it is the imperious call of the hour that we—"the Indians" must not lag behind in the march of nations and forget the sublime idealism and the message for which we stand. Let the lessons of the shining scores of centuries serve as beacon-light to guide us through the gloom of the present, and inspire us with noble impulses and courage for the achievement of the mighty ends which we are destined to fulfil in this world.

TEACHINGS OF VEDANTA

By Swami Atulananda

The Vedanta Philosophy is based on the Vedas, the sacred Scriptures of the Hindus. Originally, so it is believed, the Vedas were one voluminous mass of literature. But just before the Kali-yuga, the present world-cycle, a great sage, Veda-Vyasa, incarnated, and omitting parts that were not serviceable for this age, arranged with his disciples the remainder into four Vedas. The latter parts of these four Vedas are called Upanishads, and these are the real Vedanta, the final crown of the Vedas. These contain the highest wisdom, how to attain Self-realisation, the goal of life.

In ancient India every youth was subjected to severe moral training before he was considered fit to become a householder and raise a family. He had to live a pure life, practise austerities, memorize the Scriptures, perform rites and cultivate devotion to God. Only after long training when his character was established was a youth allowed to marry and take his place in society as a citizen.

Some students, however, were not satisfied to end their training there. Postponing their marriage they set out on another course of study in which would be communicated to them the deeper meaning of religion. These teachings were considered very sacred, and were imparted only to fit students. The teachers were holy and learned

Brahmins. They lived in ashramas in the forests, where they meditated and taught.

The wise teachers knew that it was not only useless but often even dangerous to teach one and all. These higher spiritual truths are difficult to grasp. Life was too short and too precious to waste it on unfit students who would derive no benefit from the teachings, and who might even lose the little faith and understanding that was theirs. So to keep the teaching pure, and the atmosphere of the ashramas holy, no intruders were allowed. The students had to be pure-minded, free from evil tendencies, intelligent, truthful, patient and collected.

The Vedanta teaching is based on the Upanishads. The kernel of the philosophy may also be found in that remarkable little book the Bhagavat Gita, which is really a compendium of the Upanishads. These are all very ancient Scriptures. The latest and most comprehensible exposition of Vedanta is now contained in the teachings of the late Swami Vivekananda.

It is not easy to give the tenets of a vast system of philosophy in a nutshell. The aim of Vedanta is to find Unity behind all diversity, the Formless One who is the basis of all forms, the Noumenon behind the phenomenal Universe, God the Reality in an ever-changing world. And He can be found only in the human heart, as the soul of our souls, as the essence of our very being. This is very beautifully expressed in the Chandogya Upanishad where the Guru tells the disciple: here in this city of Brahman (the human body) is a house (the human heart). In that house is a small lotus flower (the soul). In that lotus flower is a tiny space. In that dwells the soul of our soul, which is God. That which dwells there should be investigated. That verily should one seek to know.

God is not far away from us, He is not a distant God, He is the Centre of our being. To realize this as an actual fact, to know this to be true, is the aim of life. And Vedanta shows us how we can come to that realization. We must remember that religion is not a thing to be learned and understood. It is an awareness, a direct perception, an experience. Vedanta teaches that our spiritual perception of God must be just as clear and distinct as are our sense perceptions on the material plane. God must become to us a reality. We must know Him as actually existing. That is the aim of life, the *summum bonum* of existence. Unless this is achieved life cannot be said to have been crowned with the highest success. The goal may be far off, the road may be hard to traverse, but consciously or unconsciously

we are all on the way. This is what evolution means. In time we will all reach there.

Vedanta points out the quickest and surest way to reach the goal. And the way need not necessarily be the same for all. The road may be chosen by each aspirant according to his inclination and temperament. So we find four paths mapped out, the path of devotion, the path of consecrated work, the path of physical and psychic control and the path of meditation. Each path shows the way, step by step, so that we may not go astray. The first steps are everywhere the same—moral training. For no spiritual progress is possible without a strictly moral life. So it is said in the Mundaka Upanishad: by truthfulness, indeed, by self-control, right understanding and purity of life, God-realisation may be gained.

Now, there are two outstanding doctrines in the Vedanta: these are the law of Karma and reincarnation.

The law of Karma, the law of cause and effect, may be expressed in Lord Buddha's saying, later also used by Jesus, "As you sow, so shall you reap." Every deed, every thought, affects our lives. Good deeds bring good effects, evil deeds bad effects. And so it is with thought. There is constant action and re-action. A man who always does evil deeds and thinks evil thoughts, goes from bad to worse. On the other hand, a man who practises charity and devotion, and who cultivates a spirit of love towards all beings, grows in sweetness and holiness. The evil-doer is always miserable. Externally he may seem to flourish, but his mind is never at peace. He is always restless and full of anxiety. But a good man even under adverse conditions preserves his peace of mind. And peace of mind is a great treasure. "As we think, so we are," says the Maitrayana Upanishad. "Therefore let a man strive to purify his thoughts. This is the old secret."

If we think happy thoughts we are happy. If we think unhappy thoughts we are miserable. And thinking as well as doing becomes a habit. One evil deed leads to another evil deed. One evil thought leads to another evil thought. Thus we become automatically bad. And thus also we can become automatically good. This is how our nature is formed, and our character established. We see then how through the law of Karma we build our own character, we shape our own lives, we create our own future. For the effects are not always immediate. They often work out in the future. Thus we are creating our own destiny.

It must be remembered that the law of Karma does not stop when we die. Our life hereafter will be the outcome of our present

life. As we sow, so shall we reap, here as well as hereafter. Nay even when we are born again into this world we will meet with some of the consequences of what we have done in our present life. And this brings us to the second doctrine, reincarnation.

According to Vedanta man does not live only one life. He lives on earth again and again. When one life is finished there may come a time of rest, or of enjoyment, or of suffering on other planes of existence. But that is only temporary. Man is re-born again to continue on the path of evolution, till he becomes perfect and no other birth is necessary. These periods between one life and the next we call death. But we do not die; we live on another plane. And our condition there is determined by the life we have lived on earth. A holy life brings a blissful hereafter; a sinful life brings misery. And our re-birth under favourable or unfavourable conditions also depends on our conduct in the previous life. "A person consists of desires and as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed. And whatever deed he does, that he will reap. To whatever object a man's mind is attracted, to that he goes and towards that he acts. And having obtained the fruit of his deeds done on earth, in other spheres, he returns again from those spheres to this world of action." (Brihadaranyaka Up.)

The soul is eternal, the body dies. The soul takes up one body after another, just as we put on one suit of clothing after another. And each time the soul tries to manifest through a more perfect body and mind. Thus we evolve, till at last the soul succeeds through long experience to fashion a perfect body and a perfect mind, through which to manifest the perfect man. Then the end is achieved, and the soul realizes that it does no longer stand in need of a physical body. Then the soul can manifest its own glory in its own way. This is called Mukti or Nirvana, eternal freedom. "He who sees, perceives and understands this, loves the Atman, the Soul. He does not know death, nor illness, nor pain. He sees everything and obtains everything everywhere." (Chandogya Up.)

Every now and then such a perfect manifestation appears on earth; a perfect man is born. These perfect men we call god-men, for they realize even in the body that they are soul, and not the body or mind, that they are part of the Divine Oversoul, one with God. When such perfect men pass away from this world, they are not born again through any law. Such men live eternally united with God.

But sometimes such free souls, filled with compassion for humanity, choose to take a mortal body again to live among men and to show them the path of salvation. These are the avataras, the saviours of men.

Freedom is the goal, freedom from all binding laws, from all limitations, freedom from everything that now holds us down. And towards this state of absolute freedom, towards this state of eternal blessedness, we are all travelling, every one of us, consciously or unconsciously. Hasten the course, hasten evolution, is the watch-word of Vedanta.

We find that our lives are guided by our desires. Each one of us, as far as he can, regulates his actions according to his desires. He who aims at wealth, slaves to acquire money. He who wants fame labors for fame. And he who wants to realize truth works in that direction. Therefore, so says Vedanta, weigh your desires and choose the highest. Do not use all your time and energy for the attainment of ephemeral things. Strive for that which is eternal, strive for liberation, strive for union with God. In other words, live a spiritual life. Desire to know God, for knowing Him your life will be blessed, here and hereafter.

And what is the nature of God according to Vedanta? He is the ocean of Self-conscious love. He is omnipresent, all-permeating consciousness and love. Everything, every place is filled with that consciousness. But we do not see Him, we do not feel His presence, therefore we suffer. Our spiritual vision is not opened; we see only the surface of things, we do not behold the essence of all Existence. But when through religious practices we develop that inner vision, when we learn to dive beneath the surface of things, then we will see Him.

That vision is obtained through prayer, contemplation, meditation and other practices. God-vision does not come of itself. It must be desired with all our might. We must strive for it with all our strength. Patiently, conscientiously, courageously we must set out on the path of deliverance. Nothing comes without effort. We must *will* to know God. Then we shall succeed. All great teachers tell us so. "Ask and ye shall receive, knock and it will be opened unto you, seek and ye shall find." Or as Sri Krishna says in the Gita, "Give thy heart to me, be to me devoted, love and worship me; and to me thou shalt attain. This is my true promise."

With such assurance before us, let us have faith, let us strive for God-vision, let us do His bidding. He will not forsake us. He

Himself will show us the way. He will reveal Himself unto us, and lead us into His presence. Then the goal of life is reached; we will live with and in Him. Then eternal blessedness will be ours. Then we will enjoy everlasting peace which is the fulfilment of all desires.

"When God is known, all fetters fall away,
All torments cease; birth is no more nor death;
And he who knows him, when his body dies,
Has for his lot blest freedom and release."

Svetasvatara

May this be our constant prayer:

"From the unreal, O Lord, lead us into the Real.

From darkness lead us into Light.

From death lead us into Immortality.

Protect us from all evil thoughts and desires, O Almighty One,

And grant us the realization that we are Spirit Divine."

THE RURAL RECONSTRUCTION MOVEMENT IN SOUTH INDIA

By A. Appadorai, M. A., L. T.

That Rural reconstruction is engaging the attention of the intelligentsia of the country is obvious from the importance given to the problem in the last one decade in the press and on the platform. It is increasingly realised that the rural classes who form well nigh nine-tenths of the population have the greatest stake in the land and that the Indian agriculturist is the foundation upon which the whole economic prosperity of India rests. The ideal in this direction was clearly put forth by Lord Linlithgow: "The ideal which all good Indians should keep before their eyes is that of a smiling and prosperous country side." It may safely be said that educated public opinion is being more and more focussed on this noble ideal, thanks to the constructive results of the reforms on the one hand and the national movement on the other. Popular control over the transferred departments has stimulated official interest in the masses. The simultaneous development of the co-operative movement in the Presidency has served to reveal to the Government the fundamental needs of the village and the magnitude of the problem. Non-official educated opinion too, though in general working in opposition to the Government, has directed much attention to the point. The new national spirit has thrown into the forefront many men and women who, in their ardent love for India, are not satisfied merely with

attacking the policy of the Government but are forming constructive programmes for the development of the masses. The Khaddar programme, the removal of untouchability, the eradication of the drink habit have been placed in the forefront of their constructive programme.

The rural areas of India are virtually synonymous with the villages since practically all of India's people live close together in the villages ; scarcely any at all live in the open country apart from other habitations. On the average a village has 418 people. In the unadorned language of the Imperial Gazetteer, "A typical Indian village has its central residential site—(it has generally two or three residential *units*), with an open space for a pond and a cattle-stand. Stretching around this nucleus lie the village lands, consisting of a cultivated area and very often grounds for grazing and wood-cutting. The arable lands have their several boundary marks and their little sub division of the earth ridges made for retaining rain or irrigation water. The inhabitants of such a village pass their life in the midst of these simple surroundings." This however should not be taken to mean a uniformity of appearance which does not exist in actual fact. Especially on the West Coast the conditions are peculiar. The inhabitants there generally live in isolated homesteads each with its own garden.

The approach to a village is often difficult. Even a casual traveller cannot fail to note that he is passing a village from the joltings he gets on account of the ruts, holes, mounds of earth and rubbish heaped on roads. In the village itself, we see that houses are almost entirely mud-built, thatched, small and badly kept. The surroundings are evidently insanitary. "The villager would spit in his own courtyard the chewings of betel and nut, and smear his walls and pillars with the dirty matter of his nose. The housewives on either side of the street sweep up the rubbish to the middle of the road, and to the front of the neighbouring vacant site." "It is often the latrine of all the children, and some of the adults. It is the common yard for cattle and dogs." The drainage water of the house is let out to stagnate. On the whole, a village in many cases presents the appearance of a slum.

Agriculture is the one great occupation of the people, and agricultural facts mould village life as seven-tenths of the inhabitants get their living directly by or depend directly upon the cultivation of their own or others' fields. While a landholder lives, his children and grand-children in whatever numbers they may be, expect to receive

maintenance from the holding as long as it is physically possible for them to get it. After he dies, the holding, if and when divided is equally shared among his sons, each separate plot of land being so divided for fear one may get a minute advantage over the others. "Many hands concentrated upon one small holding, naturally make light work but many bellies waiting to be filled from its produce make light meals."

The outstanding feature in the life of the peasant is that he is so completely a creature of environment that merely to keep alive is a problem for him. Indeed, the farmer's life can be generally described as a life of anxiety. The first obstacle he meets with is the condition of the soil, as many acres of land require his constant toil. He is working to-day with the same crude old-fashioned implements and methods as his forefathers did, not only years but centuries ago. His next hurdle in this obstacle race is the want of water. Those in touch with the agricultural population know the anxious days and nights which farmers and agriculturists pass when the monsoon has delayed even by a few days, for they know to their cost the truth of what Cato said, "husbandry is such that if you do one thing late, you are late in all things." Having watered the ground or slightly before doing it, the farmer's thought turns to manuring his lands.

We now come to the planting stage. The raising and preservation of good seeds have always been a problem with the poor ryot. In most cases the portion of the previous year's harvest reserved for seeds would have been absorbed by an unexpected marriage or a funeral and at the beginning of the cultivation season the ryot goes about borrowing or buying seeds which naturally cannot be of the best quality. The disease of the growing crop is another source of anxiety.

Watering of the harvested crops is his next item in anxiety. Hemingway says: "Estimates made by co-operators of the loss involved in selling a crop at harvest time instead of a few months' late, when prices have risen to a normal level are rarely below Rs. 10 an acre." While his income from land is thus precarious and small, he generally makes no attempt to augment his meagre resources.

The number of people whom he has to feed tends to multiply to the very margin of bare sustenance,—the evil effect of early marriage and want of prudential restraints in our social system. He spends a good deal to meet social obligations like marriage and festival. In some cases there is a big leakage in drink. He has to purchase his requisites generally at high prices, and he is prone to borrow.

He is illiterate. He is in an atmosphere of superstition and tradition. Caste with its segregating effect enters into every detail of individual life, and this social system has been particularly so harsh upon the so-called untouchables and unapproachables. Malaharies especially have in this respect been honoured by Swami Vivekananda with a title of "lunatics", and many of them are still kept in a state of submission and helplessness. And lastly the old esprit-de corps of the village with its internal cohesion is disappearing, and the village is degenerating into a mere collection of individuals.

This survey is useful as it shows us that economic backwardness and social conservatism are the characteristics of village life. Said Gandhiji in Madras: "The most deep-seated disease of India is undoubtedly not drunkenness, undoubtedly not untouchability..... that the largest number of the people are poverty-stricken." Sir William Hunter says that one-fifth of the population goes through life on insufficient food and one-tenth of the population is living barely on one meal a day, "consisting of stale Roti, and a pinch of dirty salt". In fact hunger is never far from the threshold of the average peasant, and during the month before each semi-annual harvest, she comes to dwell in the huts where she has been so many times before. And the worst of it is, the thing runs in a vicious circle. A strange weakness has now entered into the life of the people. The inert and lazy is content with earning what is barely sufficient to maintain life itself. The evil increases at a compound rate, reducing further the capacity for work and the power of resistance to ills that beset life.

The problem of this vicious cycle of economic backwardness and this strange weakness is at the bottom of the problem of comparatively insufficient productivity. There has been a lack of growth in productive power in proportion to the increase of population for the last century or more. During the last 50 years alone, there has been for all India, an increase of 54 millions or 20 per cent. in population, but the productivity of the land has not increased proportionately. According to one estimate the productivity of India is only one-third of Japan, while, in agricultural efficiency India appears to stand 22nd among the different countries of the world. This disharmony between possible productivity and actual production is again attributed to various causes :—

1. The Indian farmer uses methods fixed by custom thousands of years ago. His equipment is both scanty and poor in quality. His common plough is merely a wooden stick with a small iron point that just scratches the ground without turning over the soil or

destroying the deeply rooted weeds. He rarely selects his seeds. He is ignorant of the way to combat plant diseases and he has rarely the best manure available. Those who own land usually have such extremely small holdings that all their time cannot profitably be employed. And more serious is the fragmentation into many plots widely separated from each other, which is a drain on the economic life of the cultivator. In one word our farmer has not moved with the times in adopting improved agricultural methods.

2. For various reasons the Indian villager's outlook on life has become pessimistic. This predisposes him to maintain a low standard of living with small exertion rather than to strive at a higher standard with greater exertion. In brief the country is not organised for the production of wealth or even for sound economic development.

3. The Joint family system tends to produce drones.

4. In addition the widely prevailing illiteracy tends to keep average production very low.

5. Further there is at present a great wastage of available resources throughout India owing to the social tradition which prevents the employment of female labour on anything like an adequate scale.

6. The caste-system of course must have its share in the blame. It is calculated to retard economic development.

7. To add to these negative factors others may be added which cause a great drain on the farmer's already meagre wealth, the fecundity of India, the peasant's want of frugal habits and his inability to augment income by subsidiary industries.

None can gainsay this but what is at the root of all these causes of low productivity, economic backwardness, and the strange weakness of the cultivator? A moment's reflection will show that these are the result of a want of intelligent leadership in rural areas. It is admitted generally that India has potential natural resources which if developed could make her people economically strong; and that the greatest asset of India is the inherent intelligence of her people. Then to have allowed the inherent intelligence of her people to rot, to have kept the peasants illiterate, encircled by a mass of superstition and meaningless custom, unable to understand or adopt the latest methods of improved agriculture, and generally to be allowed to drift into this strange weakness, is the result of want of leadership in village life. The Indian peasant is not lacking in readiness of response,—a response which would be proportionate to the accessibility and practical character of the opportunities provided and to the sincerity and humanity of the people, directing the work of instructions and experiment. But for over

half a century, the intelligent middle classes left the country-side to educate themselves, and to earn money in learned professions. Thus at a time when villages require intelligent guidance it happens that it is not there.

This leadership and intelligent guidance must be supplied; this is the need of the hour. The view is sometimes pressed that the Sircar is to be blamed. We have got into the groove of associating all development with the initiative and control of the Government, and we blame them for having neglected the village. The one century of British rule has been mainly devoted to the achievement and maintenance of peace and order, and the development of communications—but even if Government had the time and energy it is too much to expect that a small body of officials encumbered by heavy routine duties, and subject to the rigid habits and prejudices of a hierarchy, could approach and handle successfully the vast rural problems affecting millions of people.

Indeed no useful purpose is served by our shirking the responsibility or resenting the suggestion, that the educated classes have hitherto safeguarded their own position, and shown insufficient interest in the peasant. Having come out of their villages to receive English education in schools and colleges they later turned to Government service and learned professions, and thereafter forgot altogether the welfare of the village which gave them birth. We may indeed plead that the educational system is at fault. The Government themselves have admitted this. Lord Napier said in laying the foundation stone of the Presidency College, Madras :—“The most direct and immediate object of the State at the present moment in promoting education is to obtain an honest high-minded and enlightened body of public servants;” but it was assumed at the time that the Western education once imparted to the higher classes of India would gradually but steadily permeate the whole population.

Yet the villager has a right to say : “You have not paid the debt which you owe to villages. Look at the numerous voluntary agencies in Denmark or in the little Australian State of Victoria with its 2,500 bureaus, or the Irish Agricultural Organisation, all trying to improve the condition of the peasants. You can also try to share with us the knowledge you have derived at our expense, and use it for our benefit.” Mr. Gokhale’s words in this connection are eloquent and will serve to conclude this point. “On every side whichever way we turn only one sight meets the eye, that of work to be done, and only one cry is heard, that there are only few faithful workers.”

(To be concluded)

THE NEW LIGHT OF ASIA

By C. R. Krishnamachari

Asia has always been the home of great religions. The Vedic Seers, Lord Krishna the Singer of the Song Celestial, Lord Buddha the Compassionate, Jesus the Christ and Mohammed the Prophet have all come from there. Divine Light has always dawned here and history has repeated itself once again in the case of Sri Ramakrishna. The Lord's choice asserted itself once again and there rose up the New Light of Asia in the body of Sri Ramakrishna.

Could we analyse the elements or aspects that enter into the composition of fire or sun, we could then only analyse and dwell at sufficient length on the several aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's life and message. It was the manifestation of Divinity itself and Divinity is unfathomable and beyond either circumscription or circumspection. Such was also Sri Ramakrishna and that was why Swami Vivekananda, the most intimate and choice disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, with all the insight he had of his message still declared at the end, "The world has yet to know the man". And I would follow him up and say, "Will it ever know fully?"

But luckily for humanity Ramakrishna did not choose to lose or lock himself up entirely in the arms of Divinity at the highest, i. e. in the *nirvikalpa samadhi* in which he was a past-master. He did realise it on several occasions and did so only to exemplify to his devotees and thereby to the world that the individual soul could even on this hard earth and in this mortal coil enlarge itself into and identify itself with Para Brahman, the Visvatman. If he kept his left eye on this visible universe he kept his right eye on the invisible source of it, the LORD. His left hand was in touch with the world and his right hand was always at the feet of the LORD. We with our ordinary vision look only at the huge banyan tree while he with his all-seeing eye saw the tree as well as the seed and the roots that sustained the tree in its luxuriant majesty. His message and mission was to prove to the world the truth of the Upanishadic knowledge that the individual soul and the Universal Soul were identical on the personal side and the Universe and its inner core, the Creator, were one on the impersonal side.

Sri Ramakrishna was the very Absolute descending on the earth in flesh and blood which were not like our gross flesh and blood but were surcharged with Divine Light. He proved not only the Advaitic principle thereby but also reflected the Visishtadvaitic

doctrine by always declaring himself "the child of the Divine Mother". It is not a matter of real difference whether we consider ourselves the children of the Divine Mother or the children of the Divine Father for none could be the child of a mother without being the child of a father also. The great Vedanta Desika combined both these ideas of the divine parentage of humanity in his happy prayer addressed to Goddess Lakshmi thus :

माता देवि त्वमसि भगवान् वासुदेवः पिता मे ।

जातः सोऽहम् जननि युवयोरेकलक्ष्यं दयायाः ॥

"O Goddess, Thou art my mother and Lord Vasudeva is my father ; and I am the sole object of your compassion."

In fact there is not a single aspect of the Hindu Religion or philosophical truth that Ramakrishna did not realise and reflect to the world. He felt himself a Hanumān and had a vision of Sītā. He gave himself up to the deepest meditation of Sri Rāma by placing himself in the relationship of mother Kausalyā and by his real mother-like devotion unknowingly won over Rāmalāla, i. e. the Child Rāma, from another ardent devotee Jatādhāri who worshipped Rāma as such. The devotee after he had come into touch with Ramakrishna began to feel sorely the absence of the usual spiritual contact with the form of the Child Rama because the Child now began to seek the heart of Ramakrishna and behave with him as with Kausalyā ; and Jatādhāri realising the mutually greater attachment of Rāma and Ramakrishna had at last with good grace to give up the image Rāmalāla to Ramakrishna and with his grace later on enjoy Child Rama's presence to his soul's content by mental abstraction and no more through the image. He considered himself as Rādhā and enjoyed in the depths of his soul the Bliss of Lord Krishna's company. He was so instinctively true and infallible in his realisation that he could feel and respond to Divine Presence at a particular spot if it had really been hallowed by the Lord's feet or pass by it if it had no divine associations. He happened once to go on a pilgrimage to Nadia, the old Navadvip, as it was popularly believed to be. He was disappointed to find no manifestation of the Divinity at such a holy place. After finishing his round he had got into a boat that moved a little distance from the bank when suddenly a wonderful vision greeted his eyes and he immediately fell unconscious in meditation. Of this vision he used later on to say thus : "Two boys (Sri Chaitanya and Nityānanda) bright as molten gold with aureoles round their heads rushed smiling towards me through the air with uplifted hands. 'They come, they come,' I cried and in the

twinkling of an eye they came and entered into this body (his own) and I fell down unconscious. I should have dropped into the water but for Hriday who caught hold of me." Being asked by Mathur he said that the old Navadvip the real birth-place of Lord Gaurāṅga had been swallowed by the river and that those sand-banks where he had the vision marked its site. This was the reason why he felt such exaltation of feelings at this place and not at the town. It is said that subsequent researches also corroborate this view.

He was not only a synthesis of all creeds within the fold of Brahmanism but also effulged out the realisation of the truths of Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. He meditated upon Buddha as the incarnation of Vishnu, venerated the Jaina Tirthankaras, and meditated upon and had a vision of the Christ in the Panchavati at Dakshineswar. In this vision he saw a divinely looking person, fair and handsome, approaching the place where he stood with his serene look fixed on him. He had beautiful large eyes, and though the nose was a little flat, it in no way marred the beauty of the face. Sri Ramakrishna was charmed with the divine expression of the face and wondered who this man might be. The figure drew near and from the inmost recesses of Ramakrishna's heart there went up the note: "This is the CHRIST who poured out his heart's blood for the redemption of mankind and suffered a sea of agony for their sake." Then the Son of Man embraced Sri Ramakrishna and merged in his person. Thus was he convinced of the Christ being an incarnation of the Lord. Long after, raising the topic of Christ before his English-knowing disciples, he asked, "Well, you have read the Bible. Tell me what it says about the features of Christ. What did he look like?" They answered: "We have not seen this particularly mentioned anywhere in the Bible. But Jesus was born among the Jews and so he must have been fair-looking with large eyes and an aquiline nose." Thereupon Sri Ramakrishna duly remarked: "But I saw his nose was a little flat;—who knows why?" Though not attaching much importance to these words then, the disciples, after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, came to know that there were three versions extant of Christ's features and one of these actually described him as flat-nosed.

Sri Ramakrishna's all-embracing soul did not stop with this. He saw the true worth of Islam and practised the Islamic doctrine and by his intense meditation he saw a vision of the Prophet Mohammed with his kindly looks, lofty stature and venerable beard.

It was thus the manifestation in Sri Ramakrishna of that God who sits far above all the religious schisms but slumbers still in the hearts of all true lofty religions. This realisation is undoubtedly an echo of that ancient religious truth and experience which every one of us repeats thrice every day namely :

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम्
सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥

"All waters falling from the sky flows into the sea; Likewise all forms of worship offered to different deities reach the Lord Himself."

Glory to the ancient Seer who first declared this religious truth, glory to Sri Ramakrishna who illustrated it in the modern times and again glory to the country which hums with the daily utterances of this lofty hymn.

If we are in need of any particular thing more than any other thing in this age, it is trust in God, knowledge of the universality of the Hindu Religion and regard for other religions. With Robert Browning we must say, "Trust God, see all nor be afraid" to which I shall add "nor be bigoted."

All these were taught by Sri Ramakrishna and to what a great extent India and the world are indebted to this "New Voice of God", we have to ponder over and realise. India's salvation lies in the proper understanding of the universality of his spiritual outlook and the world's salvation lies in understanding the fundamental basis of it viz., the brotherhood of man for as the Divine Father or the Divine Mother or as some religions say of the Divine Parents all humanity is one brotherhood. It appears as though it was the divine will that the East must draw near to itself the West through Sri Ramakrishna for it was he that with his prophetic eye saw that the West, the greatest worshipper at the altar of Mammon, must be drawn towards the Atman and so did he specially command his chosen disciple Vivekananda to go there with the gospel of Hinduism and just mark the almost parental solicitude of the bidding for he said "My dear Naren, worry not about the bliss of *samadhi*, for you are meant for something greater, the service of mankind, the children of the Lord. Lo! There are many of my beloved disciples in far-off land who need and are waiting for my message but whose language I know not. And it is ordained that you should carry it there and deliver them from Mammon unto God." The situation of Vivekananda asking for the blessing of *samadhi* and Ramakrishna bidding him go

forth to fight the darkness of materialism is entirely in tune with the situation in which Arjuna prayed to Krishna for being spared from the horrible task of killing his own kith and kin in battle and Krishna bidding him go forth with bow and arrow to fulfil the *dharma*. Here in the East did the Sun of Ramakrishna rise and his rays, his Tejas i.e. the great Vivekananda shoot into the West dispelling the darkness of rank materialism. By teaching India to be manly and unsophisticated in her spiritual outlook Ramakrishna has put dynamic force into her soul and by sending to the West his message he has helped it to turn its face towards God.

If we should cease to be indifferent to God, if we should nevermore defile our pure God-given souls with religious discord and scorn and not offend the God that dwells in them as much as in ours, if we should no longer suffer the bondage of narrow orthodoxy in the false name of religion to the detriment of the Soul's advance and the unfoldment of the nobler national Soul, we cannot escape harkening to the voice of Sri Ramakrishna, the modern Krishna and his greatest disciple Swami Vivekananda, an Arjuna in the spiritual realm, whom Romain Rolland characterises as essentially Napoleonic in the spiritual realm. Sri Ramakrishna has himself declared that he and his disciple Vivekananda were only incarnations of the ancient Nara and Nārāyana, who according to the Mahabharata were Krishna and Arjuna. So their voices are to us the *Abhinava-Bhagavadgita* and we shall follow them for the achievement of our individual as well as the national goal—Lokasangraha.

Sri Ramakrishna said that in his exalted spiritual trance he saw far beyond the sun and the stars a sage seated with a luminous form, and a child in an equally luminous form ran up to the seated sage and caressing him said : " We shall now go down to the earth for a brief span of time to set right things that have gone wrong there. The sage was Nara and the child was Nārāyana. They both came down here to our blessed land as Vivekananda and Ramakrishna. One day while standing in the presence of Lord Siva in her favourite temple at Kamarpukur, Ramakrishna's mother felt a series of waves of light passing from the sacred Linga into her own body and as the effect of this divine transmission she swooned. That light that passed into her became Sri Ramakrishna. Hence have I ventured to call him a Light and 'THE NEW LIGHT OF ASIA'. May it shed light on our paths and lead us to our goal.

THE HINDU WOMAN'S IDEA OF LOVE SACRIFICE AND SPIRITUALITY

By Swami Bodhananda, Vedanta Society, New York.

Many people in this country have the erroneous notion that the Hindu woman has no freedom at all; neither religious, nor social. The sources of information upon which this notion is built are very evident. There are two main sources of information for people of the Western world upon our conditions in India. First of all, there is the report of the missionary, and then there is the British Government report. Neither of these two sources is perfect and reliable. The missionary, in the first place, goes to the foreign country to save the soul of the heathen. He naturally goes with the attitude of a superior, and his interest is to see among the people all the vices and shut wilfully his eyes to their virtues, if they have any. Then the British Government in India, of course, has its own interest. It tells other peoples that the Hindus belong to an inferior civilisation, and by many other stories justifies its existence in India. But we shall not discuss the details of these two sources of information in this afternoon's talk. I am going to read to you one or two extracts that I collected from some eminent authorities. They will give some light upon these stories that you hear from the representatives of those two other authorities. We read this in a book by the great French writer Jaccoliot, called "The Bible in India". This is his opinion upon women in India:

"India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship, a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of women and of having only made of her an instrument of pleasure and passive obedience. What! here is a civilisation which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man, and gives her equal place in the family and in society."

Another writer says: "The Begum of Bhopal rules over an area of about 7000 square miles in the heart of India. She has her army, her own laws, courts, etc. The idea of a woman sovereign is familiar to the Indian mind. The Begum of Bhopal is queen in her own right as much as Queen Victoria in England. There is absolutely no indignation or scorn against her. There is no man except the ruling prince, with as much influence in Hyderabad as the Dowager Lady Salar Jung—the widow of the Ex-prime Minister of the Deccan."

"The idea that women are despised in India is an Anglo-Indian myth. The name of the Hindu lady, Ahalya Bai is respected throughout India. In 1857, during the Indian Mutiny the Rani of Jhansi died on the battle field fighting sword in hand for what she considered was the cause of her country."

The Hindu ladies, in ancient as well as in modern India, have always ruled the life of the Hindu man. There have been eminent women in spirituality—women like Gargi and Maitreyi. These ladies discussed philosophical and spiritual subjects with men. Not only that but most of the teachers of the Vedas were women. They were seen of truth, and today the whole world respects their teachings, because the Vedas are the most ancient of all religious books. In the Western world, where Christianity prevails, women have only recently received some freedom. In the Bible we find this passage: "It is a shame for a woman to speak in a church. If she wants to know, let her ask her husband." But in India, even today, we find the very highest teachers among woman. One of my own teachers was a woman and I have not yet found another woman like her in morality, sobriety and spirituality. Those people who do not know the actual conditions of our social and religious life make those remarks upon the Hindu woman. They say that the Hindu woman is not educated. But, what is education? It may be that the Hindu woman is not literate; she does not read books. But she is the best educated woman, because she knows the principle of education. True education is the expression of the divinity within. These women may not read books, but they express this divinity; so they are the best educated persons.

If we judge education by its fruits, then we can know the value of education of these women. Education must create harmony and happiness, must establish peace in the family, in society, and in the world at large.

The Hindu mother is the most graceful and most revered person in the home. The Hindu man worships her; she is the Goddess of the home and its ruler. The husband, the son, the daughter, the servant, not only obey her, but worship her. In India we are not taught "Therefore shall a man cleave to his wife and leave his father and mother"—not that. In India when a man is married if his father and mother are living, he brings his wife to them, and lives with them. In all domestic matters he obeys the mother and not the wife.

You have also heard that the Hindu woman is not very kindly treated in the home, and many other stories that concern her life,

But I will tell you : Because the woman is noble, her sacrifices are noble too. The nobler you are, the greater are your sacrifices. If the Hindu woman, for instance, eats last after the others have been fed, she considers it her privilege. She does not feel insulted or humiliated, but honoured by it. She is the hostess, the leader. It is her duty to feed others first and then eat what is left last.

Then you have also heard that the Hindu widow does not marry again. There are two great reasons why she does not marry again. First of all, it is not highly moral for a woman to marry a second time. The woman is the teacher. She must teach man. She must teach by her own example. In India we never see women flirting with men. I will tell you one more thing : It was in India that the idea of the motherhood of God first arose, and it prevails today. In the West they worship God as "Father", but in India we worship God as "Mother" also. If he can be a father, why not a mother also? They both are symbolic. God is neither male nor female, but if we can worship Him as a man, why can't we worship him as a woman? Then, there are great advantages in that idea of motherhood of God; in the first place, the mother is more lenient, sweeter, softer and kindlier than the father. Naturally the son or the daughter takes more liberties with the mother than with the father. The child is closer to the mother, more familiar with her, than with the father. The father represents the sterner qualities, and the mother the softer qualities. The Hindu chants this hymn : "Oh Mother, Thou art incarnate in all women; all arts and sciences are but imperfect manifestations of Thy infinite knowledge. Thee we salute, Thee we salute, Thee we salute, Oh Mother!"

If the woman can cultivate that idea that she is the mother of man, she is his teacher; if she can maintain that superior attitude, then she can wield a great influence over man, she can wield him in the right path. The woman is really superior to the man. There is no sentiment in it, but the truth. The Hindu man, because he idealises the woman, idolises her. He is extremely sentimental in this respect. In India no Hindu man beats his wife, but in some States of your country even to-day, in the backyard of every house there is the flogging post for the wife-beaters. In India there have never been any wife-beaters. It is the worst sin for a man to insult his wife. Of course, there are exceptions, as they say, every rule has its exceptions. There are black sheep in every fold, and there are traitors in every camp. But that is not the rule.

In India when a man speaks to a woman, he bends his head. It is an insult to the modesty of woman to speak to her, face to face. That is the attitude of the Hindu man towards the woman.

Now, as to this question of marriage: In India we have the "prudent" marriage. That is, the marriage is arranged by the parents, or the superiors, or the elders. I believe in that. I will tell you why this marriage by courtship is not always a success. These young people are guided not by true love, but by sentiment. It is a sort of emotion on their part, and they are not mature in their wisdom and judgment, and they very often make mistakes. But in India, these leaders of society are the ones who determine for the young people whom they should marry; because upon the marriage and its product depends the welfare of the society as well as theirs. Marriage is not for personal pleasure only. If all these immature young men and women are turned loose upon society, the result will be confusion and chaos and the offspring of that sort of marriage will be born criminals.

So, in India we have prudent marriage, because upon the offspring of the marriage, depends the future welfare of the society. So, the leaders of the society have a right to dictate to these young people whom they should and whom they should not marry.

Then the question of widow marriage: Why the Hindu widows are not married again:—First is the moral reason, and the second is the economical reason. In India, whether for good or ill, we have the custom that every woman must marry. And there the women out-number the men. Now, if every woman must marry, and if there are fewer men than women—then if a woman marries again as soon as she loses her husband, she deprives a sister of the chance of getting married. That is the reason from the standpoint of social economy. Why should there be this widow marriage? It is not moral for a woman to marry a second time, and her happiness does not depend upon the number of times she is married. If these women in other countries who remain spinsters, if they can remain clean and pure by non-marriage and do not feel lonesome and unhappy, why not these widows, who have had the chance of marriage and were married can be pure, clean and happy? I think here, because of the economic conditions, the average woman either must be married to have a husband to support her, or she must work. That is not the case with the Hindu woman. She has always a home, and is always cared for if she is a widow, by her mother or father, sister or brother even by distant relatives. In India, because the Hindu woman is eminently spiritual, she knows how to protect

herself under all circumstances. Here is a story to illustrate that. Once a dancing girl came to a palace, and a young man made indecent advances to her, and this woman not only resented that but rebuked that man. She said to him: "If you dare to do that again, you will meet with my shoes first." That is the idea of the Hindu woman's moral courage and chastity.

Then a word about the Hindu woman's love. She does not waste her love. In India, the courtship begins after the marriage. Here in this country, much of the love is wasted, but there the love is conserved and it develops finally into a sort of spiritual unity. In India marriage is considered as a union not between two people physically, but between two minds. That is the reason why the wife is called *Sahadharmini*—spiritual co-partner.

You have also heard of the *Sati*. Of course, that custom prevailed in India for some time. It was in existence for two or three centuries, but it was abolished about a hundred years ago. You know marriage in India has always been considered as a union between two souls. There may be some superstition in it, but that is the idea. This custom of *Sati* was not a compulsory one. If a widow wanted to die with her husband, she could do that. It was entirely voluntary. My great grand-aunt was a *Sati*. She had four children. After her husband died, she wanted to die with him, and those children sat around her and implored her not to die. Then she stretched out her arms, and put her fingers on the flame of lamp, the fingers burnt, but she did not manifest any sign of pain or agony, and she said: "I care very little for my body." So, afterwards she became a *Sati*. Is that not a glorious instance of love? Here in the Western world love is a sort of commodity. If two people agree there is love. A woman loves her husband to-day. She thinks he is a god, a hero, and a few days later she changes her mind, and calls him a beast. There is no fidelity and devotion and sacrifice in this commercial love.

In the Mahabharata we find this story. It illustrates the Hindu idea of love. Yudhishthira and his wife Draupadi were living in exile. One day Draupadi asked him: "How is it that you who are such a virtuous man, had to suffer all these insults and privations and you are a great lover of God?—Why does he not protect you?" Then he answered her: "My dear Draupadi, I love God not for anything I receive from Him. It is my nature to love Him. I am not a shop-keeper in love." The noblest expression of love is sacrifice—in true love there are no boundaries. It flows in all directions. If we can cultivate that love by spiritual understanding, then we love all beings, animals as well as men.

If we can realize the basic principle of life, which is love, then we can remain firm and immovable under all circumstances. Then we can be truly faithful and devoted to our friends, relatives, parents, sisters, brothers, children—and all humanity.

The Hindu woman is spiritually cultured. And because she is spiritual, she is naturally moral and beautiful. If you can find a firm seat in spirituality, let us call it God, then and then alone can you be a good citizen, a good husband, a good wife, a good child. So, that is the need of to day. You have beautiful things in your country, but that element is lamentably lacking. So, to make life beautiful, blissful, and peaceful we have to have real spiritual culture.

We are taught that we must not do unto others what we would not have others do to us. But we do not practise it. I once saw a play here: One man was making advances to a maid-servant in the house and there was another man who was making advances to the former's sister. He was indignant at that man and went to protect his sister. Then this maid-servant said: "Why are you doing to me the thing which you do not like another man to do to your own sister?" Ninety-nine percent of men are like that. They have not the broader understanding of life. We must be respectful to others and honorable and truly and really moral and spiritual. If you protect your sister, if you know it is not right for your sister to be annoyed by a man, why do you annoy another woman? If you want the exclusive love of your wife, why do you not let other men have the same claim upon their wives' love? That is the most impertinent thing, spirituality. A spiritual man in India bows his head to a woman. He naturally protects her; a spiritual Hindu always looks upon a woman as his mother. And the Hindu woman assumes the motherly attitude in her treatment of men. She feels it her duty to teach men right behavior and right conduct. There lies the greatness of the woman, and the woman can perform that great duty only by spiritual power and knowledge. That is my appeal to all women: Teach men good behavior by your spirituality and motherly love and dignity.

In closing, I will tell you another story from the Mahabharata as an illustration of the Hindu woman's ideal of love and sacrifice. There lived a king who, somehow or other, had lost his kingdom, and retired into the forest, and lived there with his wife and only son. There was another king who had a daughter, and this princess, when she reached the marriageable age, was asked by her parents, the king and queen, to choose her husband. We have eight kinds of marriages in our Scriptures and that is one kind. We call that

Swayamvara—marriage by choice. Then this princess said, "All right, I will." She selects this young prince who was living with his father and mother in exile in the forest. Then, after having made up her mind to marry him, she returns home, and tells her father and mother that she has found a man and that she would marry him. Then presently a seer comes to the palace, and when he learns that this princess was going to marry the son of the hermit king, he says to her: "That man whom you have chosen for your husband will die in one year from to-day." When the king and the queen heard that they asked the daughter to change her mind and not to marry him because in that case she would be a widow in a year. Then she said: "Since I have given him my word of honor and I am devoted to him, I will not give up this choice, even if he dies in one year from to-day."

So, the father and mother could not prevail upon her to give up this choice; she was married and after one year, this man died. This happened unexpectedly when he was picking flowers in the forest and his wife was with him then. Then *Yama*, God of Death, sends his messengers to take away this dead man's body, but this woman sits near him. She was so brilliant in her genuine love and spirituality that these messengers could not approach her, they went away, then *Yama* comes himself and says: "That man, your husband, is dead. You leave his body and go home." She said: "No, if you take him you have to take me also." And then he answers: "Your time has not come yet. I can't take you. Your husband's time has come." But still she does not leave the body, and then *Yama* says to her again: "I am very much pleased with your devotion to your husband, and I offer you a boon—what will you accept?" Upon this *Savitri*—that was her name—says: "Give me this boon—that I may have children." *Yama* says: "Be it so. You will have children. Now go home," without realizing the seriousness of what he said. Then *Savitri* says: "You said I would have children, but if you take away my husband, how can I have children?" Then *Yama* returned him his life and *Satyavan*, the prince, woke up from his sleep of death. This conversation between *Yama* and *Savitri* is a most interesting and instructive story in the *Mahabharata*. In India every man and every woman knows this story. There we find a splendid example of love and sacrifice through spiritual understanding.

In India the woman is considered as the epitome of the past, a reservoir of the future. There are some religious orders, the male members of which, worship women, even little girls. Says Manu :

Where the women are happy there the gods are happy. Indeed where the woman is rightly educated and spiritual there dwell harmony and prosperity, bliss and peace.”*

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Madras Guide Book. Published by Ajit Kumar Co., 9, Ammen Koil Street, G. T. Madras. Price Rs. 3. pp. 175.

This is an illustrated guide dealing with all places of pilgrimage and historic importance in the Madras Presidency and Mysore. The publication of this book has removed the long-felt want of a proper guide to all visitors to Madras. The book consists of three parts:—the first part traces the origin and development of Madras, “The Garden City of India”, and gives an interesting account of the prominent institutions that add to its importance; the second part gives a graphic description of the places other than the City of Madras and the last, though not the least, is devoted to a pen-picture of the Mysore State which, nonetheless, attracts a good many visitors every year. The whole book affords interesting and useful information to the travelling public. It has moreover been adorned with 70 beautiful photos on Real Art Paper and we doubt not that it would be of great help and interest to inquisitive travellers and antiquaries. The reading matter is printed on 40 lbs. D. Demy Feather weight paper and the whole book is bound in excellent cloth.

Six Lessons on Raja Yoga: By Swami Vivekananda. To be had of the Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Bhagbazar, Calcutta. Price 8 as.

This book is a beautiful record of interesting class-talks of Swami Vivekananda on the subject of practical spirituality. The notes were preserved by a devoted American disciple and originally published in 1913 for private circulation. In response to a general demand it has now been published for the good of the public. The book with the Swamiji's masterly exposition of the subject and many valuable hints and directions of Sadhana, especially of Raja Yoga, will undoubtedly be a precious and authoritative guide to serious students of practical religion.

The Vedanta ; Its Theory and Practice : By Swami Saradananda. Udbodhan Office, Calcutta. Price 6 as.

* Reprinted from the Swami's *Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy* recently published by the Vedanta Society of New York, 34 West 71st Street. The author, Swami Bodhananda, a disciple of the great Swami Vivekananda, has been working for the cause of Vedanta in America for more than a score of years. He is now the President of the above Society, New York.

It is a reprint of the author's lecture on Vedanta before an American audience. The booklet will be of much help to those who want to know in a nutshell the fundamentals of Vedanta.

A Rational Treatise on Sandhya Practice: By U. P. Krishnama-charya. Published by S. Krishnaswami Iyengar; 2/5, Arumuga Chetty Lane, Triplicane, Madras. Price 8 as.

It is a booklet on Sandhya Practice with original Sanskrit Texts appended at the end of it. The book is mainly devoted to a lucid exposition of the various rules governing the mind-culture, (Sandhya Practice). The elaborate English explanations of the Mantrams coupled with the elucidatory notes on peculiar words and phrases of the original, furnish a key to the proper conception of how Sandhya is to be practised and the desired spiritual result is to be attained.

His Holiness Meherbaba and Meherashrama: By Kaikhushru Jamshedji Dastur, M.A., LL. B. Published by R. K. Irani, Meherbad, Ahmednagar, Deccan.

The author depicts in this brochure the life of a living saint named Meherbaba. He was born of Zoroastrian parents in 1894 in Poona and displayed extraordinary powers of head and heart in an early age. He is said to have attained spiritual illumination before the age of 20, and established an educational institution under the designation of Meherashrama at Meherbad for the spiritual education of all irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. The author has devoted one chapter to an illuminating discourse on the processes of God-realisation. The booklet is, after all, an interesting study.

I. National Souvenir. II. Indian National Calendar. Published by Messrs S. N. Rajan & Co., Shiyali, S. I. Ry.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the two above calendars illustrated with a galaxy of saints, savants and Indian patriots.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A VILLAGE WORKERS' CONFERENCE

Under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Baliati, Dacca, a Village Workers' Conference was held at the local Math premises during the 93rd Birthday Ceremony of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva. The President-elect Babu Rajani Kanta Basak, being unable to attend the Conference for reasons of health, Babu Nibaran Chandra Sarkar, B. A., B. T., the Head-Master of the local H. E. School was voted to the chair; and he read the thoughtful printed address of Rajani Babu, one of the most sincere national workers of India. Seventy-five delegates from different Seva-samities and eight hundred visitors from the neighbouring villages attended the Conference. Papers were read, speeches delivered, and resolutions passed on the reforms of village

education, sanitation, industry, Co-operative Society, disintegration among communities, organised relief, etc. A representative committee was formed to put these resolutions into practice. The ceremony terminated happily with the performances of 'Nachiketa' and Chaitanya-leela.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, RAJKOT

Swami Vividisananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar, has sent us the First Annual Report of the Ashrama from March 1927 to February 1928. The Swami conveys his sincerest thanks to all those who have helped the Ashrama with money and in various other ways, and he hopes that they will continue the same patronage, sympathy and support.

This Ashrama, a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, has tried, in its humble way, to live and preach Vedanta as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda by making renunciation and service its motto. Within the short period of one year of its existence, the Ashrama has proved its usefulness by its silent activities. Below is given a short account of the work done.

1. Discourses on Vedanta philosophy and religion were conducted regularly thrice a week in the Ashrama, and the following books were finished in that connection:—Gita, Isha, Katha, Kena, Prasna and Mundaka Upanishads, as well as Swami Vivekananda's Karma-Yoga and Bhakti-Yoga.

2. A series of class-talks were given to the upper standard students of the Saurashtra and the Alfred High Schools explaining, through fables, stories and anecdotes, the fundamentals of the Hindu religion, especially the duties of student-life.

3. In March 1927, under the auspices of this Ashrama, Swami Madhavananda, the Ex-President of Adwaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, who is now in charge of the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, California, U. S. A., delivered a lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna at the Connaught Hall, and then again in May last the Ashrama availed of the presence here of Swami Sambuddhananda, a monk of our Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, and organised a lecture on Practical Vedanta at the same place.

4. The Ashrama, as it stands for the unity and harmony of all religions, celebrated the birthdays of Buddha, Sri Krishna, Jesus Christ and other world-teachers, and thus tried to promote universal brotherhood and fellow-feeling amongst the people.

5. The Ashrama, according to its small means, helped some poor deserving students with money. One boy reading in the 4th standard of the Alfred High School got help of Rs. 8. a month since August last, and another boy reading in the 6th standard of the Saurashtra High School got help of Rs. 2. a month since February last. Lastly, in co-operation with the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, this Ashrama conducted relief-work for over five months in Cambay, Baroda and British territories affected by the last disastrous flood. At a time when the roads were completely washed off and rendered all the more impassable on account of thorns and brambles, and the people were in the grip of an indescribable distress, prompt relief was brought to the doors of all, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Centres after centres were opened reaching succour even to the remotest villages on either side of the Sabarmati, and the whole area relieved, covered about 300 square miles. The

work of relief consisted in feeding the unfed, clothing the naked, distributing seeds, grain, and medicine free, opening cheap grain shops and finally in building nearly 1000 decent huts for the homeless ones. The money spent for this relief work came up to nearly Rs. 40,000, a detailed account of which is expected to be published shortly.

This is the long and short of the humble service rendered by the Ashrama. God willing and circumstances permitting, we hope the Ashrama will be able to extend its scope of work in the near future, and prove to be a source of great good to the people of Kathiawar.

BANKURA RELIEF

Monthly report of the works of the Ramakrishna Mission

The general public have already come to know from the newspaper-reports that some districts of Bengal are in the grip of a terrible famine. Harrowing incidents that generally follow in the wake of such calamity have reached our ears from Bankura and other places. Deaths from starvation, painful disease, suicides, sale of children and other things of this description, have added to the horrors of this scourge of nature. With the almost depleted funds at our disposal we have started a relief-centre at Bankura hoping that with the progress of our work we shall be able to get public co-operation which was always shown to us in the past in unstinted measures on such occasions. But we must confess that the help so far received is not commensurate with the demand. During the last month our total receipt has not exceeded Rs. 3,000, which is too inadequate to minister to the needs of the people. Our workers have been seriously handicapped for want of funds to extend the area of their activities. The area in which our relief-work has been going on stands in sore need of substantial pecuniary help. The necessity of clothes is imperative. Rainy season is fast approaching, which will make transport of rice and other articles from the towns to the affected area very difficult and expensive. We have to stock at least 600 mds. of rice for the rainy months and this will require at least a sum of Rs. 4,000.

We have been publishing in the newspapers the weekly reports of the relief measures undertaken by the Ramakrishna Mission with appeals for funds. A summary of the work done during the month is given below:

Date of distribution.	No. of Villages.	No. of recipients.	Amount of rice distributed.	
			Mds.	Srs
12-5-28	13	230½	12	12
19-5-28	29	337	17	9
27-5-28	44	488½	25	5
3-6-28	68	700	35	18
10-6-28	74	810	410	25

The above report will show that the scope of our work is gradually increasing. This relief must be continued for some months more if we really desire to save the famine-stricken people from dire consequences. All contribution in cash or cloths, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned:—

- (1) President, the Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belurmah Dt. Howrah.
- (2) Manager, the Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
- (3) Manager, the Advaita Ashrama, 182-A, Muktaram Babu's St., Calcutta.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

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PRAYER



यस्मात्सर्वमिदं प्रपञ्चरचितं मायाजगज्जायते
यस्मिंस्तिष्ठति याति चान्तसमये कल्पानुकल्पे पुनः ।
यं ध्यात्वा मुनयः प्रपञ्चरहितं विन्दन्ति मोक्षं ध्रुवं
तं वन्दे पुरुषोत्तमाख्यममलं नित्यं विभुं निश्चलम् ॥
यं ध्यायन्ति बुधाः समाधिसमये शुद्धं वियत्संनिभं
नित्यानन्दमयं प्रसन्नममलं सर्वेश्वरं निर्गुणम् ।
व्यक्ताव्यक्तपरं प्रपञ्चरहितं ध्यानैकगम्यं विभुं
तं संसारविनाशहेतुमजरं वन्दे हरिं मुक्तिदम् ॥

Adoration unto the Supreme Being, pure, eternal and all-pervading, the motionless Reality, the one Being, meditating upon Whom the sages attain liberation, sure and undifferentiated ; One out of Whom the visible world, the scene of diversity comes, in Whom it rests and to Whom it returns in the end when the world-cycles close.

Adoration unto the Lord, the Destroyer of all worldliness and Bestower of Salvation, the undecaying Being, the Master ; One who is attainable through meditation alone, Who is free of illusion, and beyond the manifest and the unmanifest; One who is of the form of bliss eternal, gracious, guileless and without any attributes, the Overlord; One who is holy, and unbounded as the sky, and Who is contemplated upon in Samadhi by the wise.

BRAHMA PURANAM

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

I.

Devotee :—Maharaj, the other day you told me that the mind can be made steady in two ways. Now, which of these two I am to follow ?

Swami :—Do hold the mind fast to the sacred feet of your Istam (Chosen Deity).

D. :—Head and heart are the two places ; wherein shall I meditate upon the blessed form of my Istam ?

S. :—Why, in the heart !

D. :—In the heart ! And how, venerable sir ?

S. :—Just consider your Deity as facing towards you while you are, in meditation.

D. :—But in the heart are flesh, and bones, and blood ; how can a man think on his Istam there ? Is it that He is residing amongst these things—flesh, bones and blood ? And shall I think on Him in this wise ?

S. :—No, don't think of the flesh and bones at all. Your Istam is residing right in the core of the heart itself—develop this idea and meditate. In the beginning, of course, the consciousness of flesh and bones, etc., will sometimes crop up in your mind, but afterwards it won't. You will forget it totally ; only the image of the Istam will then reign supreme in your mind.

D. :—Shall I think on my Istam exactly as I find Him in pictures and idols ? Or in any other way ?

S. :—No ; not exactly so ;—in that form but living and luminous.

II.

D. :—In the Scriptures I have read and also heard from many that Japam should be performed contemplating

simultaneously on the meaning of the Mantram (Holy Name). Now, how to think on this meaning?—Letter by letter or by the Mantram as a whole?

S.:—Not so; and do you know what it is like? It is just like addressing a man by his name. The moment I address you by your name, your form also flashes into my mind. Similar is the Mantram and the form that is borne out by it.

D.:—How shall I perform Japam? Mentally or muttering low?

S.:—When you are alone in a solitary retreat, then do it in a manner as may be audible to you only. And if there is any body near-by, it must be done silently in the mind; but the lips must move in either case.

III.

D.:—For the last few days in my meditation, I clearly perceive the Mantram shining forth in letters, bright and effulgent before my eyes. Then I do not see my Istam, the Mantram alone forming the sole object of perception. What shall I do, sir? Shall I try to think on the image of my Istam alone after driving away the Mantram from the mind? Or what?

S.:—That is very good,—an auspicious sign indeed. Yes, surely 'that is good'. But both have to be thought on. The Mantram is no other than the Brahman Himself manifested through name. Hence you should not drive it off from the mind. Think on the Mantram and also the holy form represented by it. Think on both. There is no good in banishing either.

D.:—Well, sir, which part of the blessed figure of my Istam shall I think on first,—the face or any other part?

S.:—Why, begin from His lotus feet after offering unto them your salutations at first; and then—face, hands or feet let come what may.

D. :—Why the Mantram is so very long? Is there any good of such a one?

S. :—True, the Mantram sometimes becomes long. But long or short, it possesses a special power; and if you perform Japam profusely you will know the truth of it in no time.

D. :—Many are of opinion that if at the time of Japam and meditation the fourth finger touches the rosary, it constitutes a sin; may I ask you, sir, why?

S. :—Do you perform Japam with the fourth finger? All right, you do as you like. And if you like to perform Japam with the fourth finger, you can do it without any hesitation. It shall not bind you to any sin whatsoever.

IV.

D. :—Maharaj, again, I see the Mantram, flashing before my eyes in a luminous form as before; what shall I do now?

S. :—Don't bother for that; it is a good sign I tell you again. But you complain you do not perceive the form conveyed by the Mantram. Why should you not, then, perceive that also? Try to see both simultaneously.

D. :—How shall I steady the mind, sir?

S. :—By regular practice daily can you make the mind firm and steady. And for this practice early morning is the best time. Before meditation any reading from the holy Scriptures would make concentration easier. And after meditation half-an-hour's silent rest is necessary; for at the time of meditation you may not derive its desired effect, and that you may have it a little later. Therefore it is said that if immediately after meditation, you divert your attention abruptly to any secular affairs or similar other objects, it will not only do you great harm in general but also deter largely the growth of your mind towards spiritual realisations in particular.

Japam and meditation, these are the food of the mind; and their practice is what constitutes the first and foremost necessity of man. If you are not able to carry on your Japam and meditation in the right way in the beginning, even then you must not give up the practice altogether. By practice alone you can gain a good deal. Daily two hours' Japam and meditation and then half-an-hour's rest is what is most required of everybody. And solitary retirement is also a great help to the spiritual aspirant. Simply by sitting silently in the secluded nook of a garden or on the solitary bank of a river, or at the lonely outskirts of a vast, open field, or by being shut up within your own closet, you can profit much. You must fix up a routine before you commence your spiritual practices. And you shall not take charge of any such work which may stand in the way of your following the routine.

V.

D. :—If at the time of meditation any form of any god or goddess other than that of my Istam appears to my mind, what should I do then, sir ?

S. :—Know it to be a very auspicious sign. Your Istam Himself may appear to you in various forms. He is one and at the same time He is many. Do enjoy the holy sight of your Istam and also welcome him that comes up in His stead. In the end you will find these different forms merging one by one into the sacred body of your own Istam.

You must give much stress on Japam and meditation specially on the Amavasya, Purnima and Astami *tithis* (the last day of the dark fortnight, the fullmoon day and the eighth day of either fortnight of the month), and also on the occasions of the worship of Mother Kali (Shyama), Jagaddhatri and Durga. You must also look upon all women as your mother. And instead of giving any 'positive' word to anybody simply say, 'I shall try' ;—for you may not be able to keep to your promise.

D. :—Maharaj, you always insist on the same theme—
‘Serve your father.’ But is it not a most unfortunate thing
for me, sir, that renouncing all I have not yet been able to
become a monk and serve your good self?

S. :—Monk! You are already that. The only thing
demarcating is that you have not taken the Gerua (the
ochre-coloured dress of a monk). But, my son, Gerua
alone can not make you a monk.

D. :—Is it not a great privilege to be able to join the
Holy Order (Sri Ramakrishna Order) and become a
Sannyasin and serve you?

S. :—Indeed, it is; but by serving your sick father,
my boy, you shall attain to the same result, the greatest
good. And if you do not entangle yourself furthermore
by marital tie or otherwise, you shall have nothing to fear
in this world anymore. I ask you again, my child,
devote yourself wholly to your father’s service and also to
Japam and meditation and the study of sacred books.

IN DEFENCE OF INDIA

For the last century and a half India has been the unfor-
tunate victim of foreign calumny and a target of relentless attack
from the Western press and the platform. The recent perfor-
mance of Miss Katherine Mayo in “Mother India” which, to say
the least, is but a dark specimen of an organised and camouflaged
method of strangulating the nobler aspirations of a resurgent
nation, beats all previous records in its naked indecency and rank
mendacity. But it is a hopeful sign of the times that this
dastardly attack of the American lady upon the society and
womanhood of India has not been suffered to pass unchallenged.
The scurrilous book has evoked a scathing criticism from every
quarter and now stands self-condemned in the face of the crush-
ing testimony of facts marshalled by the stalwarts of Indian
society to meet the charges laid at the door of India. The publica-
tion of a “Rejoinder*” by Mr. K. Natarajan, the well-known

*Miss Mayo’s Mother India: A Rejoinder. By K. Natarajan, Editor of the
Indian Social Reformer. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras.

Editor of the Indian Social Reformer, with a thoughtful introduction from the facile pen of the learned Editor of the Indian Review, is indeed a fitting reply to the tissue of canards embodied in "Mother India". The writer has categorically exposed the hollowness of the charges made by Miss Mayo and proved to the hilt that "she is a purblind propagandist and her real purpose is political and racial" rather than altruistic. She has spared no pains to calumniate the national character and aspirations of the Indian people so as to justify foreign domination in the land at a time when India is fighting tooth and nail for self-government and her fate is trembling in the balance. She has picked up some isolated facts from here and there and has generalised them into a statement affecting the whole nation. In fact "her aversion to everything Indian is rooted in ignorance"; and still she claims an intimate acquaintance with the life and aspirations of the Indian people as Abbe Dubois professed to do during the regime of the E. I. Company in his insidious activities!

Miss Mayo embodies in herself an amalgam of vitiated taste and coarseness of moral nature. Vulture-like her eyes are always fixed upon the charnel-house of evils of our social life and "she shrieks herself hoarse over the iniquities of Hinduism and the Hindus". She leaves out of account at the very outset the temples of all-India sanctity and runs hurry-scurry to Kalighat to hunt up the gruesome holocaust there and "is terrified at the slaughter of affrighted goats in the Kali-temple". But in her righteous indignation she totally forgets that "thousands of goats and sheep, cows and bulls, and pigs are daily killed in the worship of the great belly-god in Europe, and America" as well as in India by persons of her own ilk and colour. In fact Miss Mayo has badly besmirched her own face with the blood of the sacrifice in her insidious attempt to throw it on the face of the Indians! She moreover waxes eloquent over the religious, social and sexual perversions of the Indians and most unblushingly asserts that "the whole pyramid of the Indian's woes, material and spiritual, rests upon a rock-bottom physical base. The base is, simply, his manner of getting into the world and his sex-life thenceforward." This kind of unwarranted hypothesis that runs riot in her book, will serve as a perfect barometer to study the perverse mentality of callow globe-trotters of her type, who take a van-

ishing railway view of a country and lecture most eloquently over the "horrible" evils of society. The learned Editor in his "Rejoinder" makes a comparative estimate of the systems of marriage prevalent in the East and the West and shows that studied ignorance of the social life of the Hindus is at the bottom of her sweeping and hasty generalisations. The writer asks: Is the American marriage an improvement on the Hindu in any way? Let Keyserling say in reply: "The possibility of re-marrying every year ruins marriage much more fundamentally than even the most frequent practice of adultery, for the latter does not at all offend marriage as such, but only offends against certain of its components, whereas divorce lays an axe at its roots. Consequently, such American women as possess this characteristic are, as types, either Amazons or courtesans, and the men, as husbands, appear subjugated to such an extent as is otherwise found only in polyandrous communities."

The ludicrousness of the whole thing centres round her imaginary search for "fly-blown Russian pamphlets" in little book-stalls all over Indian Calcutta; and of all the provinces in India she has chosen Bengal and its people as her special object of animus and attack. "Bengal," she says, "is the seat of bitterest political unrest—the producer of India's main crop of anarchists, bomb-throwers and assassins. Bengal is also among the most sexually exaggerated regions of India; and medical and police authorities in any country observe the link between that quality and queer criminal minds—the exhaustion of normal avenues of excitement creating a thirst and a search in the abnormal for gratification." But it must perturb the self-complacency of Miss Mayo to learn that even "this God-forsaken province produced during the last century the largest number of great Indians who have attained an international reputation;—Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Keshub Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda in the sphere of religion; Michael Modhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sorojini Naidu in the region of poetry; Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose and Sir P. C. Roy in the realm of science; Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, Lord Sinha and Chittaranjan Das in politics; Sir Gurudas Banerjee and Sir Asthutosha Mukherjee in education. What a brilliant galaxy to

spring out of the muck of Miss Katherine Mayo's most sexually exaggerated province! Even New York and Chicago, we fancy, have not produced greater men in so many spheres in comparatively so short a time!" Did she ever care to have a peep into the report submitted by late Sir Narayan Chandravarkar and Mr. Justice Beachcroft appointed by the Government of India to examine the scores of men who were held in confinement for alleged complicity in anarchist doings, before brandying them as fire-brands and monsters of immorality? The President of the New Orient Society, U. S. A., rightly charges that the anonymous witnesses, all speaking in Miss Mayo's own phrases, parade through the volume and points out that Henry Hubert Field, the defender of the atrocious massacre at Amritsar in 1919, was Miss Mayo's constant companion in India; and it is no wonder that he would be found by her more trustworthy than either a Beachcroft or Chandravarkar! A glance at the aforesaid report would convince even an atrabilious fanatic that "the talk about the degeneracy of these boys is pure bunkum... The muck is, in fact, in Miss Katherine Mayo's mind more than in Bengal or any other part of India, though of course, India like every other part of the world is compounded of mud and sky."

Mr. Natarajan has very ably shown in his book that "the Indian's manner of getting into the world" is not essentially different from that of other races and nations; that the child-marriage with the safe-guards associated with it in all but a very small number of cases, has not been a cause of race-degeneration, and the age of marriage has been rapidly rising. It is indeed a curious phenomenon that in all her vitriolic arraignments against our social life and customs, the main spring of her inspiration is Abbe Dubois whose sole aim was "to set off the excellences of Christianity against the evils of Hinduism." Like her mentor she also scented phallicism in all the sacred marks and symbols that are found on the foreheads of the Shaivites and Vaishnavites of India but she forgets in her zeal that "no Christian to-day is reminded by the Cross of the male organ of fertilisation; neither is the Hindu by the Linga." She would do well to read the works of Prof. James Bisset Pratt, Monier Williams, Dr. Barnett, Prof. H. H. Wilson, the Rev. J. E. Padfield, not to speak of Indian writers, about the origin and

significance of these religious symbols, in order to get rid of this sex-obsession. Mr. Padfield concludes his chapter on "The Hindu Sacred Marks" with the remarks that "these various details remind us of the Christian mark, the mark of the Cross made upon the forehead at Baptism, or of that seal mentioned in the book of Revelation where the angel sealed the servants of our God in the forehead."

Her attack upon Hindu women is the climax of her intellectual perversity and coarseness of moral fibre. She is not able to quote any specific authority to substantiate her monstrously degrading accusation against the motherhood of India. Any one who is in the know of the actualities of Indian life and of the high honour in which the womanhood is held in India must admit that her statement is a frigid, calculated lie. "India may forgive Miss Mayo many things, but this cowardly assault on the honour of her mothers, never". An American friend justly remarked, "The book is more a revelation of Miss Mayo than of Mother India."

She has, moreover, felt no scruple to take liberties with the writings and statements of the persons of the position of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore; she has shrewdly nibbled at stray passages from here and there to subserve her nefarious purpose. The appendices of this "Rejoinder", contain illuminating criticisms of Miss Mayo's book by Dr. Margaret Balfour, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Rev. Popley, Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Rightly has Mahatmaji said: "Her book is the report of a drain inspector sent out with one purpose of opening and examining the drains of the country to be reported upon, or to give a graphic description of the stench exhaled by the opened drain." In short the whole structure of Miss Mayo's book is "an imitation of the scenario of a cinema show," and is but an ugly monument of deliberate suppression of truth, perversion of facts and downright misrepresentation of Indian character and institution. It cannot be denied that every society, not excluding ours, has its inherent defects and evils, and yields ample room for improvement and reform but to weave the isolated and stray incidents of social life into a sweeping condemnatory generalisation against an entire population for political ends is to stultify

all moral sense and truth and thereby to prove one's own woful ignorance of the spring of social life and its distinctive mode of evolution. However, we sincerely believe that the "Rejoinder" must have its desired effect and we doubt not that the spirit in which he has approached the subject and the critical scrutiny to which he has subjected the "Mother India" will convince every one that her book is a standing insult to the intelligence of humanity and is the outcome of racial prejudice and a policy of political propaganda to lower the Indians in the estimation of other races of the world.

"Sister India *" attuned as it is to the kindred strain of the foregoing "Rejoinder" is published, says the author of the pamphlet, neither in the specific interest of India nor for the exclusive benefit of the United States—(although these two countries with Great Britain as a third are most immediately concerned). Its deeper purpose is the promotion of human brotherhood based on mutual understanding and good-will. This pamphlet is a valuable collection of the sober criticisms of Miss Mayo's book by some eminent writers of the East and the West. Mr. D. Norman Brown whose opinion is quoted in the pamphlet says: "Miss Mayo made of herself a kind of journeying camera through India selecting for preservation the most horrible and striking scenes that are quickly recordable. Coming from a country barely three centuries old, she cannot visualise the weight of five millennia of tradition in creating social inertia she attacks, still less the situation responsible for the rise of tradition." Mr. Alden H. Clark while writing in the Atlantic Monthly proves beyond any reasonable doubt that "Miss Mayo's basic assertions are not true, that she has leaped with magnificent agility from one-sided and limited evidence to her general conclusions, and that India remains the same land of mingled sorrow and hope, darkness and vision, weakness and strength, that she was before Miss Mayo made her very American, whirlwind tour." There are, besides, many such weighty opinions of other eminent personages, incorporated in the pamphlet, which serve as a scathing exposure of Miss Mayo's malignant mentality.

The Asiatics have realised to their cost that the mealy-mouthed Westerners, especially the Christian missionaries, are

*To be had of Chester Green; 88 Washington Avenue, Cambridge, Mass.

very subtle instruments to denationalise and misrepresent the unwary Orientals. Sister Nivedita in her article entitled "Lambs among wolves*" originally published in the Westminster Review, has exposed the nature of the mischievous activities of the Christian missionaries in India, who carry on propaganda in the West to paint the Hindu society in the blackest possible dye. The recent publication of this thoughtful article in the shape of a booklet is sure to bring into the lime-light of public views the sinister motive and characteristic of a Christian missionary and will enable the sober-minded people to realise the falsity of the unwarranted charges laid by Miss Mayo and the like at the door of Hindu society.

In recent years many other books dealing with the culture and problems of India have seen the light of day; and it would not be an exaggeration to state that Sister Devamata's "Days in an Indian Monastery"† stands out as one of the most instructive volumes so far written, in view of the realistic picture it presents of the various aspects of Indian life. Sister Devamata has been in intimate touch with the social and religious life of the Indians for about a quarter of a century and unlike Miss Mayo, she has studied and assimilated the varied expressions of the cosmic social order of the Hindus and embodied her personal experiences in the beautiful volume with the distinct object of "creating a wider understanding and a deeper sense of kinship between East and West." Miss Mayo has stumbled upon every aspect of Indian life and her attack upon the womanhood of India has been monstrously indecent. The illuminating pages of Sister Devamata's "Days in an Indian Monastery" will be an eye opener to Miss Mayo if she cares to commune a little with the Sister of her own clime and nationality. "The mother," says Devamata, "is the ruling spirit of the house." "Indo-Aryan tradition gives great freedom to woman. Unselfishness is a living, ever-present quality; a natural, spontaneous attribute of her character. Many of the usages misunderstood by the Occidental world are based on a desire to honor, protect or cherish woman—not to subordinate

* Lambs among wolves: By Sister Nivedita. Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

† Days in an Indian Monastery: By Sister Devamata: Published by Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, U.S.A.

or dishonor her." "Indian women possess unusual executive ability. Indo-Aryan annals contains the record of able rulers and administrators among them. There have been notable spiritual teachers also among the women of India. There have been various gifted poets among the women of modern India but the Indian woman is primarily a mother and guardian of the sanctity of the home."

It is interesting to note that while Miss Mayo is oppressed with filthy ideas at the sight of the sacred marks on the foreheads of the Shaivites and Vaishnavites of India, a person of her own sex and colour studied them from quite a different angle of vision. "In South India," says Devamata, "they put the mark of their religion on their foreheads. Every morning the burden-bearer of society stamps his face with this reminder of his faith. It may have become a mere habit or tradition, but it is indicative of a state of mind containing within it possibilities of higher unfoldment which materialistic, acquisitional progress cannot offer." She moreover touches upon the characteristic simplicity of Indian life and remarks that unveiled frankness indeed appears to characterise all Indians. "The Indian manifests always a striking detachment from his external life. He is subjective rather than objective and he rarely identifies himself fully with it." Extensive quotations from the book can thus be pitted against the frivolous remarks of Miss Mayo. Indeed it requires a deep spiritual insight, sympathetic, intellectual outlook and, above all, an untiring patience to understand and assimilate and then pass judgment upon the character and destiny of a race whose cultural genius is diametrically opposed to that of America, nay, of the whole Western world. Devamata's book is really an acquisition and it would serve as a guide and corrective to many an erring soul of the materialistic West.

The sober section of American population have already recorded their sense of indignant protest against "Mother India"; and if the result of the popular toll taken at the heated debate recently held in Scottish Rite Auditorium under the presidency of Arthur Upham Pope, Chairman of the New Orient Society, be accepted as a proof positive of the American attitude towards the book, there is no doubt that the public opinion is against it.

"The audacity of ignorance," remarked Arthur Pope, "shines through the book. I mark not only Miss Mayo's lack of mental qualifications but her lack of ethical qualifications. The history of India is the history of people who love learning. If the Indians are illiterate, it is because their masters in the 18th and 19th centuries have not given them education." He further observed that the Ku Klux Klan, the oil cases, child labour and the discouraging development of licence among young Americans might as well be attacked even as India had been assailed by Miss Mayo. Syed Hossain, an East Indian launched into a spirited assault on the book. He pictured Hinduism as "holding aloft the torch of civilization throughout the ages." "Mother India," he said, "is not sociology but pornography." Thus the better sense of humanity has prevailed at last. India stands as the soul of the East. "Behind India lies the long Indian summer of the soul, thousands of years of the contemplative life and it is this which has given her qualifications for world efficiency in the higher realms of education. When this is generally acknowledged then the Aryans of East and West may once more join hands and out of the re-union must come a new and wider civilization." And we sincerely believe that these expectations of Sister Devamata shall be realised at no distant future. May God fructify these anticipations.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF HINDU BOYS AND GIRLS IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

By His Highness Prince Ravi Varma of Cochin

"As a lamp does not burn without oil, so a man cannot live without God." "The tender bamboo can be easily bent, but the full-grown bamboo breaks when an attempt is made to bend it. It is easy to bend young hearts towards good, but the heart of the old escapes the hold when so drawn."—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

"Every human heart has its religious yearning, it has a hunger for religion which sooner or later wants to be satisfied."—The Right Hon. F. Max Muller.

Religious ideas are common to all peoples, the difference being merely one of expression. Since people of each and every persuasion

needs religious education, Hindu boys and girls should certainly be taught the Hindu religion. Says Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa: "Every man should follow his own religion. A Christian should follow Christianity. A Mohammedan should follow Mohammedanism, and so on. For the Hindus the ancient path, the path of Aryan Rishis, is the best." It is highly necessary and advisable that the school-going population—boys as well as girls—should receive also religious instruction while attending schools and colleges.

It is to be admitted that the gradual deterioration of the Hindus as a class is attributable to their failure to receive any religious education worth the name and to their failure to have their actions influenced by what is said in their great works and religion. At a time when most of the other nations of the world were sunk in comparative ignorance the Hindus had attained a high state of civilisation mentally, morally and materially. This is evident from the records left by those who visited India when history began to be written and from a perusal of Sanskrit works of unchallenged antiquity and authenticity and the various branches of knowledge. A perusal of the accounts by European visitors of the Empire of Vijanagar in South India goes to show that the Hindus paid greater attention to the religious and moral side of our education than to the material. No State in India in recent times ever rose to such a prosperous condition as that of Vijanagar. Vijanagar can stand a favourable comparison, even from a material point of view, with any of the most advanced modern States of Europe or America. Even its ruins—the ruins of Hempi—commands our respect and admiration as much as even the ruins of Ancient Rome.

To whom does this Empire of Vijanagar which rose to eminence during the Dark Ages of Hindu Rulers (Vijanagar would not stand a favourable comparison with any of the Empires of our Golden Age) owe its eminence?—To Sree Madhavacharya who afterwards became the great Swami Vidyaranya, the Vivekananda of those days. After Sree Sankaracharya no one has expounded so well the principles of Advaita Philosophy as Madhavacharya. It is also a well-known fact that there was no branch of science or art in which he had not written standard works, quoted as authorities. In spite of the part he played in the building up of this Empire of Vijanagar, this great soul is generally known only as a great Sannyasin and scholar and not as really the original builder of this great Empire in the South.

The shallowness of the modern system of civilisation and education people began to sound seriously only after the Great War broke out. The eyes of the nations of the world are now opened and

they have, in a way at least, begun to realise the paramount importance of spiritual over material things.

We Hindus attained more material prosperity than ever attained by any of the modern States of Europe under the system of education now in vogue, when we attached importance only to the spiritual and moral phase of our education. Other advantages—material advantages, which we reckoned only as evanescent and therefore less important—came, as a matter of course, in the wake of our spiritual advancement, only as by-products to which we attached no great importance. Our fall is commensurate with the gradual change of ideal in this respect. Now that our eyes as well as those of the other nations are opened by the recent cataclysm there are decided signs of a change of the angle of vision. Let us strike the iron while it is hot and take some effective steps to develop also our moral and religious side before we cool down into materialism when it will be too late to make the iron take the shape we want it to assume. It is now that we want half a dozen Vivekanandas to put before us the simple universal truths contained in our Upanishads and other sacred works in that masterful way which a Vivekananda alone can do. It is, however, left to us to make an honest and earnest attempt in this direction. And this is the only way in which we can, in our own humble way, requite the hard and stupendous service that this great Swamiji did us, and prove that the invaluable work he did on our behalf has not been in vain.

The high ideals of life depicted in ancient Sanskrit works do not fall short of the high ideals of life even from the modern point of view. The tenets and doctrines of Hindu religion comprise the entire range of human concerns and relations and they can indeed be adopted to all the needs and aspirations of mankind spiritual as well as material. For instance, even the modern democratic ideals in regard to Government fall short of the ideal in this behalf depicted in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the histories of the Solar and Lunar Dynasties.

The religious influence kept the people from not swerving from the right path and from the high ideals laid down in the great Sanskrit works on law and etiquette. We Hindus would not have risen to the high intellectual and material eminence we once occupied had we not been living the life, enjoined upon and required of us by our religious codes. When religion began to influence us less and less, we gradually began to deteriorate as is only natural in the case of a class whose rise was due to the influence of religion.

The state of things is not a bit better even after we Hindus have come into contact with the West, and even after we have been educated for about a century in colleges after the model of those of the West. In a word, we have not appreciably improved by the Western system of education so long in vogue, as hitherto this system has paid little or no attention to the indigenous religious influences which contributed to our progress and prosperity in the past.

It is desirable that East and West should adopt the course peculiar to each to attain the object common to both. Many of those who do not understand this fact fail to attain the object they have in view. Many of these come to grief as they hunt after the shadow of the Western ideal mistaking it for the real thing. No two men are alike in every respect and it is therefore always a failure if one tries to copy another in *toto* while at the same time we see the wonderful beneficial effect in the case of those who only aspire to have their angularities worn off by associating with worthy companions. What is true in the case of two individuals of one and the same community must be true with far greater force in the case of two races so different from one another as the Hindus and Europeans. If, however, proper and timely care is taken, East and West may safely absorb some of the best things of each and this in due course may facilitate the attainment of a fuller, nobler and a more perfect life. Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore rightly remarks that "the education that we now receive comes from the West. It is frankly a foreign education. This might be invaluable for us, if we already passed a grounding in our own culture. But divorced from previous training in that which is our very own and from the vantage ground of our very own assured position in the world's culture what we receive becomes to us either as an outer embellishment or as a burden. For the ultimate significance of food is in the living body and not in the store-house, and where that unity of life is lacking the food merely accumulates and is not assimilated. Likewise if India has a living culture of her own, an organic centre of all her cultures co-ordinated, then only can she receive this knowledge of the West, not as an abstract thing unrelated to her own life, but as a concrete thing, fit for the various uses of life and giving an added strength to her own mind."

As it is, we see in the present system of education, enough to warrant an alteration. Experience has but too fully taught us of the evils of a system of education on foreign lines unattended with any religious instruction. That the evils we deplore are not graver or worse than they are is due to the hereditary tendency of the Hindu

mind which is essentially religious. It is, however, a source of consolation to feel that the Hindu University Act is calculated to give a strong impetus to the spread of Hindu religious culture and literature. In the long gone past, i. e., the Golden Age when we were very prosperous, religion pervaded every phase of our life and our deterioration began when religion began to influence us less and less. The difference of opinion in regard to religious instruction is not on principle, but on the mode and means of imparting it. This brings us to the question of the form of instruction that should be adopted to achieve the object in view. This object should be attained by—

- (1) Lessons in the first principles of Hinduisim—tenets common to all the various denominations or sects of Hinduism.
- (2) Lectures.
- (3) Reading of stories from the Puranas which drive home into the pupils' minds the principles underlying Hinduism and rules for our life.
- (4) Prayers and singing of devotional songs after the pupils are made to understand the meaning of the words of which the prayers and songs are composed.
- (5) Lastly—this is the most important thing—the pupils should realise in the hostel the ideal of Gurukulavasam.

Gurukulavasam means that the students live with their teachers who treat them as their children whose conduct is closely watched by them and to whom they render timely advice whenever the teachers see that the pupils require such directions from them. Such timely advice and giving opportunities to the students to imitate the good examples set at home by their teachers can alone be expected to have any influence worth the name on the students.

For, from the very day people begin to write, what they daily see before their eyes in the head lines of their copy books are the noblest truths put in the simplest and plainest words. If what people see with their eyes and hear with their ears were alone sufficient to make them good, the world would have been composed only of good men. But this is not what we always see. So seeing and hearing alone cannot be expected to do much. While on the contrary where young people have the benefit of being brought up in the midst of living examples set to them by those amongst whom they reside, the result is found to be most satisfactory. So no pains should be spared to see the students develop their character in the hostel under the influence of examples set to them by their teachers who will sympathetically render their wards timely advice whenever

the latter stand in need of such help to enable them to mould their character in the right direction. In this connection there is a weighty circumstance which must not be overlooked. Students in their general and educational as well as personal capacity are wholly out of the control and surroundings of home when once they are sent to school. It is the duty of those who claim to educate them to bring them up in the spirit of their (the students) own ancient and domestic faith. The parents, cannot, as things now stand, be expected to do anything to help their children in this direction. The parents are under the mistaken impression that their duty to their children ends once the children are admitted into schools. They are still under the impression that everything that is wanted will be done by the teachers as used to be done in the old days. In the case of those students who are not living in the hostels the parents do not keep in mind the fact that these students now remain under the influence of their teachers for only about five hours a day in five out of the seven days of a week. The environments under which these innocent young pupils in the most plastic period of their life form their character, are, especially in towns, not what they ought to be.

If anything goes wrong with the children the parents hold the school and its staff of teachers responsible for what has happened. Most of the subjects are taught in a foreign language and the students have to turn out a greater amount of work than English students to whom there is no language difficulty. The popularity of a school depends more on the percentage of success in the University examinations than on its influence on the formation of the character of the pupils. So the teacher devotes the comparatively short time at his disposal to fill the students' heads with notes or otherwise enable them to come out successful in the ordeal of the class and University examinations. So long as a school succeeds in producing good results at the examinations, it is sure to continue in its popularity.

This is why the thing that plays the most important part in the formation of the students' character is the influence they are under outside class rooms; hence our insistence that every student should be required to live in the hostel where the Gurukulavasam life should be given rebirth. Great and insuperable as the difficulty may be in schools to adopt a course of lessons on religious subjects, means can easily be devised in hostels where the students will have free access to the gracious presence of revered teachers competent to imbue them with high ideals of duty and noble ideals of conduct so as to form part and parcel of their being.

In ancient times religion was not taught as such in one's younger days. The young people were brought up under a strict course of discipline and they led a life as laid down in the Smrities. They at this stage were taught the religious tenets. At the next stage, when they had passed their boyhood or girlhood, they began the study of religion by the perusal of Puranas in the sacred language (Sanskrit) or in the vernacular. These Puranas also tell of men who had bliss or misery according to the good or bad lives they led. The teachings of these works kept people in the path of virtue. Later on in life those who aspired to know more of our religion, took to the study of the philosophy of that school to which they belonged. The text-books proper of our religion are the Puranas, Upanishads and the Philosophies of the different schools.

As the great men of the Puranic Age never thought that their community would so deteriorate as to require a primer on religion explaining its tenets and religious observances to bring home to them the truths of Hindu religion, they never wrote a text satisfying the conditions then existed.

It is our considered opinion that Hinduism should be taught now by means of suitable primers on religion; and we trust that the Rulers of Native States, conspicuous amongst them being Their Highnesses the Maharajas of Mysore and Kashmere who may justly be called 'The Defenders of the Faith' and noble men of the type of His Highness the Maharaja of Durbhanga than whom a better prop our religion has not, should take the necessary steps or make the first move to have such a text book published by one well versed in the Puranas, Upanishad and Smrities and who has at the same time caught the true and broad spirit underlying Hinduism of the right type which is tolerant and not opposed to other religions.

Before concluding the section dealing with the means to be adopted to impart religious instruction in schools and colleges, some extracts are given, which go to prove that it is absolutely necessary to give our children religious instruction, to see that religion is a living force with them and to daily devote some time to contemplation and prayers. R. W. Irine writes: "All life is from within out. This is something that cannot be reiterated too often. The springs of life are all from within. This being true it would be well for us to give more time to the inner life than we are accustomed to give it, especially in this Western world. There is nothing that will bring us such abundant returns as to take a little time in the quiet each day of our lives. We need this to form better the higher

ideals of life. We need this in order to see clearly in mind the things upon which we would concentrate and focus the thought forces. We need this in order to make continually anew and to keep our conscious connection with the Infinite.... "The Kingdom of Heaven is to be found only within, and this is done once for all, and in a manner in which it cannot otherwise be done, when we come into the conscious, living realization of the fact that in our real selves we are essentially one with the Divine life, and open ourselves continually so that this Divine life can speak to and manifest through us. In this way we come into the condition where we are continually walking with God. In this way the consciousness of God becomes a living reality in our lives; and in the degree in which it becomes a reality does it bring us into the realization of continually increasing wisdom, insight and power. This consciousness of God in the soul of man is the essence indeed, the sum and substance of all religion. This identifies religion with every act and every moment of every day life. That which does not identify itself with every moment of every day and with every act of life is religion in name only and not in reality." The naked sage Totapuri used to say: "If a brass pot be not rubbed daily it will get rusty. So if a man does not contemplate the Deity daily his heart will grow impure." And so does Sri Ramakrishna say: "As to approach a monarch one must ingratiate oneself with the officials that keep the gate and surround the throne, so to reach the Almighty one must practise many devotions, as well as serve many devotees and keep the company of the wise." All these sayings of the sages and savants go to prove in an unmistakable term that the imparting of spiritual education to our boys and girls is as essential and vital as life itself.

The next question that has to be considered is whether there are any books on Hinduism the perusal of which can help the individual to develop his or her character and bring out the best qualities possible to human life and character. Indeed there are many such works written in Sanskrit and in the Vernaculars as well as in English. To achieve this object, namely, to mould character and to enable emotions, the most important works are the Puranas in Sanskrit. Selections from these sacred books bearing on the phase of character under discussion must be read and explained. Next in importance are the original works in the Vernacular of great men of the type of Tunchath Ezhuttachan, the Vyasa of Malabar. Lastly, are the true translations in Vernacular and English of the Puranas and Upanishads. It is hardly possible that the translations of our sacred works can be

equal to the original. But, though the finer touches may be lost in the translations, the great outlines will no doubt remain. And surely, by means of their own mother tongue, people who are not instructed in Sanskrit language may obtain ready access to the vast religious treasures of their motherland.

Besides this ancient heritage of national culture, the teachers at least should read as often as possible such works in English as the *Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa*, the *Lectures of Swami Vivekananda* and the latter's life in four volumes by his disciples. These works in English vividly bring forth the spirit of toleration and universality that pervades Hinduism. One who has caught the spirit that runs through these biographies and lectures is the proper person to teach the pupils the tenets of Hindu religion. These books indubitably prove that Hinduism as a system of religion fulfils all the conditions necessary for progress and endurance, is eternal in its truth and application and needs but due understanding and observance to enable one to attain the highest development one is capable of. If Hindus have deteriorated and fallen from the high pedestal they once occupied, the cause of their down fall should be sought elsewhere than in an original defect of the religion itself. If this deterioration is to be checked and our community is to be restarted in its upward march, religion must be pressed into service so as to vitalise the manhood as well as the womanhood composing the community. The situation is one with which religion alone can grapple.

In order to maintain a steady and sustained progress we must always keep a high ideal before us. It was with this view that the late Sir Surendra Nath Banerji once observed: "Let us not therefore minimise the value of ideals. They appeal to imagination, stir the heart, stimulate the noblest springs of action, but ideal and practical must be blended into one harmonious whole. There must be no divorce between real and ideal. The ideal must be subordinated to the practical governed by the environments of the situation which must be slowly and steadily developed and improved towards the attainment of the ideal."

"In nature as well as in the moral world there is no such thing as cataclysm. Evolution is the supreme law of life and affairs. Our environments such as they are must be improved and developed stage by stage, point by point till the ideal of the present becomes the actual reality of the next, or it may be the succeeding generation."

In the words of Mr. N. Gopalaswamy Iyengar we may say: "It is man-making religion that we want, it is man-making education, all round that we want. It is not given to every one to become the 'Dheera' spoken of in the Upanishads. Let us not compromise our ideals on account of the poverty of our achievements..... Let us not scoff at those who are stronger than we are and look about for learned arguments to make our weakness a virtue and their strength a vice."

THE RURAL RECONSTRUCTION MOVEMENT IN SOUTH INDIA

(Concluded from the July issue)

By A. Appadorai, M. A., L. T.

The most common cry is "Back to the land." The lecturer makes a passionate appeal to *all* to go back to the villages and set them right. It would be interesting to know how many of the *all* take up this passionate appeal. Assuming for the present that the product of our University is willing to go back to the village, the fact remains that by his temperament and training, he is unfit to be of much service to the village community. His knowledge of agriculture is such that he would be "far more likely to spoil the stalk already there than to multiply it." He feels himself completely cut off from the people there: his knowledge of the mother tongue is rather scanty and he has little to teach the masses. The villager often does not want such a man.

Again, taking a broad view of the interests of the country, it cannot be said that urbanisation and its concomitant of industrial progress have gone forward sufficiently. The problem would appear to be that there are proportionately too many depending on the land—and no country purely agricultural has ever become great, as no country purely pastoral has attained any celebrity in the history of the world. Industry needs to be developed too, and educated men are required for this purpose as much in towns as in villages.

And above all, our aim must be to harness the resources of all available educated men for the service of rural reconstruction. There is not only one method by which the educated may contribute their share. Every one has his bent and opportunities, and if every educated member of the community makes a small contribution in

money, time or energy, the aggregate contribution will be very considerable and the village reconstruction is bound to proceed at a rapid pace. Organisation is the vital need.

Organisation, broadly speaking is such a disposition of the energies and resources of the educated community as to enable them to produce the most desired and composite effect. Modern life has become so complicated that, unless there is efficient organisation into associations, individual efforts, however well-meant, are bound to be infructuous. Organisation evokes and keeps up interest and enthusiasm. They present a valuable opportunity for workers in the cause to come together to discuss the actual condition of affairs, to take note of the difficulties which beset the path of further progress, to compare notes in regard to the needs and necessities and the manner in which they should be tackled, to take counsel and lay out plans for the future. It keeps alive continued and concerted effort. Organisation is in fact the key of the situation.

As the initiative for organisation must come from a unified body, it is suggested that a joint committee of the Y. M. C. A., "The Ramakrishna Mission" and "The Servants of India Society"—the three voluntary agencies with established reputation and confidence in the country, and working for the uplift of the masses—may be formed in Madras. Its main business will be to educate the public on the need for a net-work of associations of educated men in the country, for rural welfare, and to give a lead to the formation of such associations.

Any semi-urban area with a population of 3000—5000 may serve as a suitable unit for one such association. It has generally within it 20—25 educated men of different grades and occupations. It may be called a "Rural Service Centre." Its main sphere of activity will be the villages all round. It is necessary that every such centre should have two or three men who can devote more time and energy to the task than the others. If the place has one or two retired men with knowledge and experience, they may well be appointed as the working heads. Care should be taken in choosing such leaders, for on their organising ability and on the confidence they are able to command does the success of the organisation depend. Every Rural Service Centre should have a good office system, with specific rules for work, and proper records of decisions agreed upon and work done, as this alone will ensure continuity of purpose and policy.

At first such "Rural service centres" may be independent but in due course, the various local centres may have a central agency

for the district for the co-ordination of work, and for making work more effective. And finally these may have an apex, which will effectively co-ordinate the work of the central agencies in the whole of South India. Thus will come into existence, a voluntary organisation of the educated community with a common purpose and a system of work, independent of the Government in its organisation but ready to co-operate with the Government departments aiding and aided by them, and giving a tone to the public opinion of the country on all matters affecting rural welfare.

The necessity for a *new* organisation may be questioned ; it may be contended that the co-operative movement should be used for this purpose. The answer is (i) that it is largely concerned with credit and it is better not to interfere with its business side ; (ii) that being largely a State movement it does not give full scope for voluntary energy to be utilised.

All the work of the organisation, local and central, will have as its main aim to strengthen the life of the villagers, to stimulate their intelligence, and to bring some joy into their existence. Be it remembered, however, that the aim should be not to remove the obstacles for them, *but to enable them to remove their own obstacles* and to bring about an internal cohesion among them, by making them understand and act upon the knowledge that all are members of one family, that what hurts one hurts all, and that prudence and good-will should make them work together for the common good.

The main lines of work may be indicated as follows :—

Wherever possible reliable Government statistics already available may be made use of by the Rural Service Centres, but there is a consensus of opinion that statistics and information in general are not adequate, specially viewed from the point of rural reconstruction. The need for it is twofold.

i. There is a variety of local conditions not only between one district and another, but village and village.

ii. With regard to many details, much more spade work is essential. Dr. Gilbert Slater says, " So far as the Madras Presidency is concerned, it appears to me that the first thing to be done is to collect a great deal more information in order to ascertain for villages of different types what is the critical agricultural operation, that is the one which there is most difficulty in getting completed in the time available, whether ploughing and sowing or transplanting or harvesting, and with regard to that critical operation, over what area the work can be done by a given labour force in a given time, and as

exactly as possible how much time is ordinarily available." We should get away from the idea that any development is possible without study, preparation, and effort. The questionnaire issued by the Y. M. C. A. may serve as a rough basis, but it needs to be elaborated so as to include greater details of agricultural life in the villages.

The next step is to make these statistics available for the members of the Local Service Centre and other centres for *study* and *research*. The more general problems arising out of these may well be left to the central agencies, which will contain the highly educated members, but the local application of each of these is the specific work of the local association. Following are some fields where research is essential:—

i. How far improved methods of cultivation as practised in the countries are applicable to South India in general, and to the various localities in particular. It is erroneous to think that this is the particular privilege of a Government Department; men who have studied economics, and are conversant with local conditions may well study these interesting questions—*e. g.*, the minimum quantity of water in irrigated fields required for proper growth,—use of artificial manures,—mechanical methods,—whether the farmer will appreciably gain by selling his crop as "paddy" or "rice" keeping by products to himself, the nature of an economic holding in different localities, and the possible means of achieving it, etc., etc. Such work is in fact done by voluntary agencies in Australia, U. S. A., etc.

ii. Connected with this is the problem of cottage industries suitable for each locality—the economic possibilities of khadder, weaving, pottery, mat-making, coir-making, fruit and dairy farming, sericulture, poultry farm, preparing ghee, vegetables for market, etc., considered with reference to local resources, traditions and aptitudes.

iii. Possibilities of development of other forms of co-operation, in relation to particular localities,—in many a country, co-operative societies have been made the basis of rural life in all its aspects.

iv. The best way of developing village cohesion.

v. Another very large field of study, in which the teacher members of such centres can take part is in regard to village education. It is no doubt agreed on all hands that the instruction given in village schools should be adapted to the conditions of rural life, and that the school itself should be the basis for the amelioration of

village life ; and it may be expected that a workable scheme will soon be introduced here. But as Mr. Mason Olcott has shown, much remains to be done—the minimum essentials in the primary school, the courses and methods of instruction best adapted to Indian children, the standardisation of a few educational tests, etc., all require to be thought out, and the best scheme ought to be evolved, and laid bare.

vi. There is again the question of the best methods of educating the adults.

Statistics and study are only a preparation for the real work—propaganda. Propaganda is of two kinds (i) indirect, (ii) direct.

(i.) Indirect propaganda consists in

(a) creating an effective public opinion in all matters affecting rural welfare. Indeed, the hope of the future lies in an *aroused* and *instructed* public opinion ; this can best be accomplished by means of public meetings, and periodical gatherings, magazines, booklets, pamphlets, leaflets, public notices, placards, and posters.

(b) in effectively bringing to bear on public bodies and the Government the need to spend more money on rural communications, housing, and sanitations, extension of rural dispensaries, starting cottage industries, to focus attention on the arranging for exhibitions and agricultural demonstrations ; in fine, to stimulate dynamic effort in such rural welfare schemes. This is best achieved by making representations through representative bodies ; and well-thought out constructive schemes will receive due consideration.

(ii.) As at present, the villagers cannot be reached through newspapers, and magazines ; real constructive work can be done only by heart to heart talks with the villagers on the many immediate problems affecting them. It will no doubt test the patience of those who undertake it. It follows that such missionary work depends for its success on the proper attitude of the workers, and the tact they have and the confidence which they are able to command. Negatively, the evil effects of drink, gambling and untouchability, the wastage of too much money on socio-religious customs and ceremonies have to be convincingly presented ; positively, the need for keeping surroundings healthy, the possibilities of "co-operation" and the need for taking to it in the right spirit, instruction in better scientific and improved methods of agriculture,—the value of economic holdings, the value of seed selection, use of artificial manures, etc.,—to those

who can understand them, and above all the need for a higher standard of life, a sanguine outlook on life and the need for making individual as well as corporate effort for realising such a standard, and the need for prudential restraints. All these and a thousand other details of life need to be impressed on their minds. Of course only such of these members as have time at their disposal can well take to this form of activity.

Different from, yet closely allied to propaganda, is the fundamental question of *Adult Education* which is the means to any effective understanding of propaganda work. Burkeley says: "The initiative for any successful movement towards adult education must come in India as elsewhere, from voluntary agencies, and unless they take a leading part in its control such a movement is not likely to prosper." Adult education is specially and very particularly in need of this spontaneous service of voluntary enthusiasm. The example of Denmark is really inspiring.

Limitations of space do not permit me to enter into a detailed consideration of this subject. Suffice it to say, our main problem here is "Elementary Adult Education" i.e. of those who have had no schooling, and are totally illiterate. Educated parents are the surest guarantee of educated children. For this far-reaching problem, no carefully devised plan of attack has yet been adopted and in consequence much of our work has been like that of men groping in the dark. Adult schools with regular tri-weekly classes in the slack season, or night schools alone will appear to be possible, unless more time can be devoted by workers of the association who will have to travel far from their places of living and avocation. But the mere starting cannot ensure success. Persuasion by Thasildars and Headmen will have to be done to get a good number of adults enrolled, and to secure their continued attendance. In arranging for all work and in methods of teaching, we should, by the way, never forget that we deal with grown-ups and not children, allowing far greater self-determination. The adult needs a very varied and interesting programme. Occasional rambles, music, concerts, and lantern lectures, must be arranged. After a good proportion have gained the Literary certificate, circulating libraries may be started, with interesting story books, illustrated magazines of art, and stimulating and interesting pamphlets on subjects like gardening, poultry, first aid, dairy-farming, etc. This will set back the danger of a relapse into illiteracy.

The above suggestions indeed presuppose an earnest desire and an intelligent outlook on the citizen's relation to the social polity;

they also indicate the lines of work and show that all branches of rural welfare work must advance simultaneously—but they do not exhaust the subject. The aim, throughout has been to show (1) that organisation is the first requisite, and (2) that different kinds of work suited to the varying educational attainments, bent, and the amount of time that each can devote to the cause of social service must be provided to keep the organisation alive, and to attain the ideal—"the ideal of a smiling and prosperous country side."

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA *

By Rao Saheb C. Ramaswami Aiyanger.

I.

When Swami Ramakrishnananda came to Madras in 1897, he was first lodged in a small building on the Ice House Road, rented by a few admirers of Swami Vivekananda. They also undertook to defray the Swami's expenses. Sometime later, he moved into an apartment of the Castle Kernan, popularly known as the Ice House, which Swami Vivekananda himself had occupied during his stay in Madras and which therefore carried with it the memory of his holy association.

The Castle belonged originally to Mr. Bilagiri Aiyanger, one who had been able to endear himself to Swami Vivekananda. He was one of the supporters of the Math in its early days and he made a provision in his will for the payment of Rs. 12 a month to Swami Ramakrishnananda.

On his death, the Castle came up for auction. We felt that if it passed into the hands of a stranger, the Swamiji was likely to be put to the necessity of looking out for another place to live in and so we

* In July 1922, after the birthday of Swami Ramakrishnananda, at the request of the Editor of the Vedanta Kesari, I recounted some of my experiences with the Swamiji which were published along with other reminiscences in the Ramakrishnananda Memorial number of the journal issued that month. For want of time, the account I gave then was not as full as I should have desired. I am therefore attempting now to supplement it by relating other incidents that come to my mind about his life and the early days of the Madras Math. [C. R. A.]

Swami Ramakrishnananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He founded the Madras Branch of the Ramakrishna Math & Mission at the request of his world-renowned brother disciple Swami Vivekananda—Ed. V. K.

were anxious and desired that if possible some friend of the Math should purchase it. Among the bidder was such a person in Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Rao. He had an idea of establishing a hospital and nursing home there. He offered up Rs. 16,000 for the house and then gave it up. It was knocked down for Rs. 17,000 or so to a Zamindar.

As the auction was proceeding, the Swamiji sat unconcerned in a far end of the compound, on a long backless bench, away from the crowd that had gathered. I was watching the bidding and occasionally went up to him to tell him, how it was progressing. He looked up and said, "Why do you worry about it? What do we care who buys or who sells? My wants are few. I need only a small room for Sri Guru Maharaj. I can stay anywhere and spend my time in talking of Him."

As we had anticipated, Swamiji had subsequently to vacate the portion he had occupied in the main building. He was then lodged in a small out-house in the compound where he lived till he moved to Mylapore.

When Swami Brahmananda came to Madras, he heard from us the story about the Ice House. He then remarked, "You were not wise in allowing it to pass into other hands. That is a place where Swami Vivekananda had stayed and if you had acquired it for the continuance of his work, it would have been very nice and a fitting memorial to him. If you had only told me, I would have somehow found the money and would not have let slip the opportunity that presented itself. Sasi is naturally indifferent to such things. You all ought to have done something."

Though the incident shows two eminent god-men seemingly different in their outlook, it reveals unmistakably the greatness of each. Swami Ramakrishnananda was so absorbed in the realm of the spirit that he did not care very much for institutions or organisations. But on the other hand, Swami Brahmananda in spite of his child-like simplicity and the giddy height of spiritual illumination which he had reached, possessed a keen judgment in business matters. This is what enabled him unerringly to pilot the work of the Mission as its first President for over a quarter of a century.

II.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was shy of appearing in public or making speeches. His method of teaching was conversational. But whenever he did deliver a lecture, it made a profound impression. If I remember right, the very first public lecture he delivered after his

arrival was on "Sri Ramakrishna and his Mission" under the auspices of the Y. M. I. A., Justice Sir S. Subrahmanya Aiyer presiding. The effects of the address were far-reaching. Swamiji had prepared with care and the manuscript of the address which he handed over to me, I preserved for nearly ten years, after which it was published by Mr. P. R. Rama Aiyer.

The name of Swami Ramakrishnananda became well-known in the city and his work was appreciated on all sides. In 1902, a public meeting was held in the Pachayappa's Hall to devise measures for giving the Mission a permanent footing in Madras. The meeting was largely attended by the citizens of Madras and they resolved "To perpetuate the memory and continue the work of the late Swami Vivekananda by establishing an institution in the city for the study and propagation of Hindu religion and philosophy." Then an attempt was made to collect funds and in this Swamiji did not spare himself. He used to say, "Begging is a test of egotism and you can measure how much ego you have by how much you mind it." He took the lead and accompanied by one or two young men, went from door to door in Triplicane, Mylapore and other parts of the city. It took two years to realise Rs. 1,700.

Then Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer issued a fresh appeal. He wrote:—"The Order of Sannyasins to which these disciples of Ramakrishna Paramahansa belong, is the noblest in the world for the work of philanthropy untainted with any consideration for the promotion of selfish ends. It has been resolved to found an institution in this city where men will be trained to preach the Vedanta, not for a salary or other remuneration, but for the love of humanity. Pandits and scholars will be invited to assemblies periodically held for the discussion and elucidation of Vedantic truths. Agencies for the relief of the destitute poor and the instruction of the masses would be organised under the control of this institution ... Funds will be needed for carrying out this noble undertaking. Shall we lack them in this land of a thousand charities? Devotion to duty, singleness of purpose and a faithful discharge of duty voluntarily undertaken must convince the people that their contributions will be well and nobly spent. The reproach will be great if the opportunity is neglected. Under the blessing of God and the immortal sages of this ancient land, success shall be ours."

III.

The appeal had a steady response, though slow. With the collections made, the construction of a building was undertaken in 1906

on a small site on the Brodie's Road obtained through the kindness of the late Akula Kondiah Chettiar, an ardent admirer of the Swamiji. On an auspicious day, Swami Ramakrishnananda conducted the religious ceremonies. It was his desire to bring Swami Brahmananda to inaugurate the function but it could not be arranged. Some friends requested Swami Abhedananda who happened then to be in our midst after his first visit to the West, formally to lay the foundation.

Mr. A. S. Balasubrahmanya Aiyer took charge of the work. The building was completed in November 1907 and he wrote to the Secretaries of the Memorial Fund, "The final bill for the construction and completion of the building comes to Rs. 5,500 ; the subscriptions hitherto collected amount to Rs. 4,100 ; so the deficit has to be met by collecting further subscriptions. The Home is ready for occupation and I understand the Swamiji moves into it on Sunday, the 17th November, 1907. I await your instructions as to what should be done on that occasion, etc."

Early on the morning of the day chosen, Mr. A. S. Balasubrahmanya Aiyer's carriage waited at the entrance to the Ice House. It was drizzling. Swamiji took the picture of Sri Guru Maharaj. He asked me to hold the umbrella carefully to protect it from the rain till he got into the carriage. We had a quiet drive and soon arrived at the new building.

It was a simple one-storeyed building tinted red. It stood on a high foundation and had a large roof terrace. Inside, there was a spacious hall and four rooms. From the hall, a door led to an open court where was another building containing the kitchen, dining room and bath room.

Swamiji was elated like a child to be inside the new building. He said, "This is a fine house for Sri Guru Maharaj to live in. Realising that He occupies it, we must ever keep it very clean and very pure. We should take care not to disfigure the walls by driving in nails or otherwise. Do you see ?"

Sri Guru Maharaj was installed in the shrine and worshipped. Abhishekam and a special offering was made to Sri Kapaleeswara. Swamiji said humorously sometime later on, "Till now I was in Triplicane and Parthasarathi subjected me to many trials. But now Kapaleeswara has drawn me to Him. You know He is the Lord of Bhikshus, as His name means, and He is sure to protect me hereafter." Poor people were fed and an assembly of Pandits was called to

chant the scriptures and converse on holy subjects. In the evening, a public meeting was held and the Swamiji requested Mr. (now Sir) P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer to address those who had assembled. With Aratrikam and distribution of Prasadam, the day's function came to a close.

IV.

During the first days in the Castle Kernan, Swamiji was "his own servant and his own cook." When he removed to Mylapore, he had with him a Brahmacharin and a cook. The live-long day was one of constant service to God.

Swamiji held classes in several parts of the city and the visitors at the Math were many. Whenever anyone came in from outside, he had to wash his feet and enter the precincts with great reverence. If a stranger ignorant of the observance happened to come in without doing so after he left, Swamiji would make it a point to have water sprinkled over the place trodden by him and thus purify it. On such occasions, I would remember the words uttered by Swamiji about the sanctity of the place on the day he first came into it. He always took great care to see that every one who came to the Math, even a coolie, received a share of Prasadam and for this he ever kept ready sweet cocoanut Laddus offered to the Lord.

Swamiji was very regular in all his habits. To give but one instance, out of many, he would never miss reading the Gita and the Vishnu Sahasranamam early every morning. Once in 1906, when Swami Premanandaji was in Madras, accompanying his mother to Rameswaram, Swami Ramakrishnananda spent a night with them both in the house where Swami Premananda's mother was accommodated. That night, he had not with him the Gita and Vishnu Sahasranamam. He asked me at a late hour to procure them from a neighbour. He kept them by his side and then only went to bed.

He reduced the wants in the Math to the barest minimum. He would often say that Bhikshannam is the best for a Sannyasin and ask some of the young boys devoted to him to beg food for him from a few houses near-by. In doing so, he had two objects in view; to keep the ideal of poverty ever before him and also to train the young to feel its glory and be purified by begging. He gave me also ample opportunities of such service.

Whenever he needed some help, he would feel shy of expressing it to any one. "If we cannot get on altogether without help, then why not ask the Lord Himself? Why go to others?", he would say. Once the Birthday of Sri Guru Maharaj was near and no money had

been received for the feeding of the poor which was an important item of the celebration. It was midnight and I was sleeping in the Math, when I suddenly woke up, roused by strange sounds in the hall. Looking about, I could see Swamiji pacing up and down like a lion in a cage, humming heavily with every breath. I was afraid to see him in that condition, but I understood later that it was his prayer for help to feed the poor. The next morning money did come. A large donation was received from the Yuvarajah of Mysore who had begun to admire Swamiji, having read a copy of the book, "Universe and Man," just then published.

Swamiji's ambition while in South India was to harmonise the philosophical systems of the three great Acharyas in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. His life of Ramanuja written in Bengali is a classic work on the subject and it contains ample proof of the veneration in which he held the Vaishnava teachers.

His respect to Sankara was exceedingly great. When he was in the Castle Kernan, a rich merchant who used to frequent the Math, spoke of Sankara irreverently. Swamiji flared up in anger and the gentleman received a rude shaking. Those who stood by thought that he would withdraw the help he was giving to the Math and later on pointed it out to Swamiji. He said, "Let him withdraw if he will. Do you think the Lord's work depends on the mercy of men such as these?"

A similar incident happened another time in Mylapore. He had been invited to a gathering held for discussing religious topics. In the course of the talk, one of the organisers of the meeting happened to refer to Sankara in a slighting manner. Swamiji could not brook the insult offered to the Acharya. He stood up and saying "I have no place where Sankara is not honoured," he quickly walked out.

Many young men approached the Swamiji in those days seeking to join the Order. I was acquainted with some of them.

One was an intelligent Brahmin youth who had lately returned from Japan. He stayed in the Math for some time and all those who saw him, thought he was ardent in his devotion and would stick on to the monastery. But Swamiji was always severe and exacting in his tests for admitting any one into the fold permanently. He would frequently ask the novice to sweep the floor or wash the utensils or do some other menial work. The gentleman above referred to could not stand it. One day, he remarked, "I did not come here to learn all these things." And immediately, Swamiji asked him to clear out.

Another was a Vaishnavite Brahmin youth. When Swamiji found that he was married and had his old parents to support, he refused to give ear to his request in spite of all his importunities. He strongly advised him to return to where duty called him and sent him away.

A third was a keen sportsman who had shot up to eminence in his line. He was a bachelor and possessed strong inclinations to a monastic life. He approached the Swamiji several times, but he always said, "What am I? You should go to our President and ask him if you want to join the Order." So he went to Belur. And there the President said, "If you are earnest, you must go and serve Swami Ramakrishnananda and come through him." When he returned, he was permitted by Swami Ramakrishnananda to stay in the Math. He would always seem meditative and would never share in the ordinary work of the monastery. A truly religious life is not so easily attained. One day he quietly left the Math and went to live in a wayside hut in Royapettah. Later on he went and stayed in Tiruvottiyur where he passed away. He was no doubt a struggling soul, but Swamiji did not see him yet fit to wear the orange robe of the Sannyasin.

These are only three random instances out of scores of similar ones. And it remains a fact that out of all these, Swamiji never admitted even one to Sannyasa. The reason is he held the Ashrama rightly far above the reach of ordinary men conceiving it as has been declared by the scriptures "sharp as the edge of a razor, hard and difficult to tread." It is sometimes said on this account that his stay in Madras was barren of results. But it must be remembered that he never cared for a following and that he only wanted to take men where he found them and give them a push upward. In the lives of hundreds of men in all stations of life his influence is flowing silently still leading them ever on the forward path. I should like to quote from two letters I have recently received, which bear testimony to the abiding nature of this influence.

One devotee writes: "Every big thought brings to my mind our own beloved Sasi Maharaja's face and his gentle smile. It was a blessed time those days and that makes me proud that we of all people had come into contact with that spiritual giant; only we did not know it then."

Another writes: "Those who have taken the dust of the feet of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji have been turned into gold. A mere touch of his has changed sinners into saints. I can myself see well

how his touch has affected me and is keeping me up in my spiritual struggle in spite of the many weaknesses and failures in me. But for him, there would not have been a spiritual side to my life at all. We met first at His feet and we shall meet again at His feet."

V.

Towards the end of 1908, Swami Brahmananda came to Madras. When he arrived, Swami Ramakrishnananda accommodated him in his own room which had been renovated for the purpose. We would himself stay out all the time in the entrance hall, saying, "Guru Maharaj and his son will stay inside; I will stay out here and serve them. What more do I want?" I have often seen him bow unobserved at the entrance to the room where Swami Brahmananda stayed. Such was his reverence to Maharajji (Swami Brahmananda was favouritely so addressed by his brother disciples).

Soon after Swami Brahmananda's arrival, Messrs. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer and P. R. Sundara Aiyer came with presents of fruits and flowers to pay their respects to him. Swami Ramakrishnananda introduced them to Maharajji. Before taking leave, Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer said to Swami Ramakrishnananda: "Will he deliver a lecture? I shall arrange everything. When will it be convenient to him?" Swamiji smiled and replied: "What is there in lectures? He never gives lectures. Men such as he can give religion by mere look or a touch."

Sometime later when Swami Brahmananda went on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram, Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer came forward to arrange for all conveniences. Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Aiyer, (Sir) K. Srinivasa Aiyanger and a few other friends also subscribed for the trip. Maharajji and Swami Ramakrishnananda were accommodated in a first class compartment. Four young Swamis and myself accompanied separately, Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer had specially commissioned me to go with the party to take proper care of the Swamis and look after all their wants.

On the way, when the train stopped at a station, I went to see Swamiji. I saw him peeping out of a window with a cigarette end in his hand. He took a puff from it, raised it to his head and reverently dropped it down. I was surprised at it for I had never before seen him smoke, though smoking is very common in Bengal. He told me, "This is holy *prasadam*." He had taken the cigarette end from the hands of Maharajji after he had smoked.

In Rameswaram, the palace of the Raja of Ramnad had been arranged for our stay. But before going there, Maharajji and

Swamiji went to the temple. They drove in a double bullock coach. When they returned, they still found us busy with the luggage. Maharajji said reprovingly, "Cannot these things wait? You came here to worship the Lord and that is what you should attend to first."

We stayed in Rameswaram for three days. On the second day, the young Swamis and myself went for a sea bath. For Maharajji and Swamiji we carried the holy water in a vessel. Abhishekam was performed to Lord Siva with the Ganges water which had been brought by Maharajji from Benares.

On the way, we had stayed in Madura also for three days. A noteworthy feature of the stay was the deep Samadhi into which Maharajji entered in Sri Minakshi's temple, seeing the image of the Mother living and moving towards him. There was a large crowd and Swami Ramakrishnananda held him up there for nearly an hour, himself all the while in an ecstatic mood with tears flowing from his eyes, singing Mother's praise over and over again repeating the sloka

सर्वमंगलमांगल्ये शिवे सर्वार्थसाधिके ।
 गरमये त्र्यम्बके गौरी नारायणि नमोस्तु ते ॥
 सृष्टिस्थितिविनाशानां शक्तिभूते सनातनि ।
 गुणाश्रये गुणभये नारायणि नमोस्तु ते ॥

"Oh three-eyed Gouri, the Consort of Narayana, Thou art the embodiment of all good, the bestower of blessedness, the fulfiller of desires and the refuge of all; salutation unto Thee!

"Oh Consort of Narayana, the eternal One, Thou art the root of creation, preservation and destruction (of the world); in Thee rest the Gunas, Thyself beyond their pale, salutation unto Thee!"

When coming out of the shrine, in an outer hall, Swami Ramakrishnananda saw the image of Adi Sankara. He was seized with a longing to touch the feet of the image with his head. But the priests would not allow him. Nevertheless, he pushed them aside, saying "Who can prevent my worshipping the Great One?" He went near and had his desire fulfilled.

(To be continued)

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA IN CEYLON

Swami Yatiswarananda, President, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras, accompanied by Swami Anantananda left Madras for Ceylon on the 29th June by Boatmail and reached Jaffna on Sunday, the 1st of July last. At the Railway Station at Jaffna the

Swamis were received by several leading men of the town, besides a number of students and admirers of the R. K. Mission. When the Swamis alighted they were duly garlanded and after an exchange of greetings they were taken in a car to "Brindavan," Vannarponnai, their temporary residence where many members of the Reception Committee, besides others, were present. On behalf of the Reception Committee Mr. M. S. Ramalingam welcomed the Swamis in a short speech to which Swami Yatiswarananda made a suitable reply pointing out how he felt that he was in a familiar country.

In the evening at 6 P. M. the Swami was invited to deliver a lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramanathan's College. There the Swami gave a most inspiring and instructive lecture, depicting the life of Sri Ramakrishna in vivid colours and exhorted the audience to model their lives and conduct in the light of the teachings of the Great Master. The lecture was very ably translated by Mr. Natesa Pillai, Principal of the Parameswara College.

Monday Morning at 9.30 A. M. the Swami spoke to the students of the Hindu College emphasising the importance of Brahmacharyam and physical culture. Seeds of spiritual life, he said, should be sown and properly watered, while the boys were yet young and free from worldly taints. The Swami next visited the Parameswara College. There also he delivered an address full of instruction, and helpful to inspire in the students a taste for spiritual culture. Afterwards the Swami inspected the Ramakrishna Mission Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya, the Vivekananda Vernacular School, and the Students' Home.

In the evening the spacious Hall of the Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya was tastefully decorated. The platform was spread over with carpets and Swamis were seated there. Above, in the shrine, was kept a life size portrait of Sri Ramakrishna, painted in oil colours. Then an address of welcome on behalf of the Hindus of Jaffna was presented to the Swamis. After making a suitable reply in some fitting words Swami Yatiswarananda addressed the audience on the "Scientific Basis of Hinduism". The Swami said that unlike many other religions Hinduism was not the product of a single genius. It had its basis on the eternal and immutable principles, those that were discovered by the sages and saviours through ages. It was the store-house of the accumulated wisdom and spiritual laws. It was therefore a synthetic religion. Hinduism was a confederacy of systems and a commonwealth of creeds. The swami further remarked that Christianity without Christ would not stand. Mohammedanism without Mahomed

was nowhere. Buddhism without Buddha suffered the same fate. But not so with Hinduism which supported itself upon the rock bed of eternal truths. After Swami Avinashananda put in a plea for united and vigorous action on the part of all, the meeting terminated with a prayer and the Swamis were taken in procession to their residence.

On Friday, the 3rd the Swamis left for Trincomalee by the morning train, Swamis Avinashananda and Vipulananda, the Vice President and the Secretary of the R. K. Mission in Ceylon accompanying them, and reached there in the evening. Before entering the town, a fairly big crowd assembled around the Swamis who were then led in procession to the R. K. Mission High School which was to be opened. The houses on either side of the roads were decorated with garlands, flowers and fruits, etc., sandal paste was distributed and scented water sprinkled, and fire-works displayed and all the auspicious signs of the famous South Indian holy procession were present there. Though it was late in the evening not less than a thousand people were waiting to greet and listen to their honoured guests. Addressing them Swami Vipulananda said that the work of the R. K. Mission in Ceylon had so long been educational and people might have thought that the Mission had no other branch of its activities. But now it had taken up its chief works, the propagation of the message of harmony of all religions, founding of temples and imparting of its inherent culture. The Swami also enlightened the audience with the inspiring message of the General President of the R. K. Mission, who wrote that twenty centuries ago Prince Mahendra visited Ceylon carrying with him the sacred branch of the great Bo Tree and the whole island embraced the new faith of Lord Buddha; it had once more been the privilege of the people of Ceylon to have in their midst the sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna, the Man of Dakshinewar. After a touching address given by Swami Yatiswarananda the gathering dispersed.

On the 5th July special Pujas and Homam were conducted in the new School building by the Swamis till noon and at 5-30 P. M. it was formally opened by His Excellency, the Governor of Ceylon. Here the Swamis had their greetings exchanged with His Excellency. His Excellency very much appreciated the works of the R. K. Mission and gave a fitting tribute to the Mission.

On the 7th Swami Yatiswarananda delivered a lecture on "The Ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission" before a large gathering and on the 8th the Swami and the party started for Batticaloa reaching there in the evening. The party was taken in procession to the Vivekananda

Hall where the Swami spoke a few wholesome words to the eager public. During their short stay at Batticoloa the Swami and the party were invited in many places, and given the same kind of reception with all the paraphernalia that are customary to the South Indian sacred ceremonies.

On the 12th the Swami and the party left Batticoloa and reached Badulla. Here the Tamilian townsmen gave an address of welcome printed in Tamil. While thanking his hosts the Swami spoke at some length on the aims and objects of the R. K. Mission in English, and his speech was ably translated into Singhalese by a local pleader. Swami Avinashananda also gave a separate address in Tamil.

On the 13th the Swamis reached Newara Eliya, a hill Station six-thousand feet above sea-level and lived there as the guests of the local Municipal Secretary. Here the Swamis visited the famous Hakgalla (Government Botanical) Gardens and Sita Eliya, the place where Sita was kept confined in the Asoka Gardens of Ranayanic fame.

From Newara Eliya the party proceeded to Nawalpetiya and thence to Kandy finally reaching Colombo by the end of July. The Swamis are expected back to Madras by the first week of August.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

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PRAYER

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त्वं वैष्णवी शक्तिरन्तर्वीर्या
विश्वस्य बीजं परमात्मि माया ।
संमोहितं देवि समस्तमेतत्
त्वं वै प्रसन्ना भुवि मुक्तिहेतुः ॥
देवि प्रपन्नार्तिहरे प्रसीद
प्रसीद मातर्जगतोऽखिलस्य ।
प्रसीद विश्वेश्वरि पाहि विश्वं
त्वमीश्वरी देवि चराचरस्य ॥

Oh Mother ! Thou art the the great Primal Energy, the seat of infinite strength ; Thou art the seed of the world and illusion Divine ; Thou hast enchanted the whole universe, Oh Goddess Supreme, by Thy deluding charms, and Thyself bestowest salvation in the world, when propitious !

Oh Goddess ! Thou Destroyer of troubles of Thy refugees, and the Mother of the universe, Thy mercy be upon all ! Oh Mother, Thou Mistress of the world, and Guardian, Thou one Ruler of the movables and the immovables, Thy grace be showered upon all !

DEVI-MAHATMYA

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Disciple:—Maharaj, while engaged in the Relief Work, I have to labour very hard all the day long; I have little or no opportunity to carry on my spiritual practices: I find no time at all; so I do not feel inclined to do such work.

Swami:—But have you to work like that althrough?

D.:—No Sir, for the first few days only.

S.:—Then, why do you complain that you find no time? It is the ordinary worldling who is often heard to grumble in this strain—that secular duties stand in the way of spiritual practices. Such flimsy argument, my boy, does not besit you, a Sadhu; you have the power of Brahmacharya (absolute continence) in you; you must carry on both spiritual practices and mundane duties simultaneously. My idea is that you do not possess any strong desire at heart for spiritual exercises; you only like to pass your time in vain works, in fuss and merriment; and your plea of shortness of time is nothing but a lame excuse. In Relief Operation the first few days may be a very busy time for you and I fully appreciate it; but this state of things does not continue for long. What do you do then? Why do you not carry on your Sadhana at that time? Don't you feel ashamed to complain in this wise? Fie on thee to grumble!

Those who are really inclined towards Sadhana do perform it under all circumstances: only they do it more intensely whenever and wherever the opportunity is more favourable. But those who always complain of inconveniences of time and place can never do any progress in their life; they wonder about like a 'vagabond' and spend their precious time in vain.

Engage yourself heart and soul in Sadhana and be plunged in it. Oh, the joy of it! If you once have a taste of that joy, all else will lose their savour to you. Then, wherever and under whatever circumstances you may be placed by Providence, you will not relish in anything else except Sadhana. True, in the very beginning, you cannot have that joy, but believing in the words of your Guru, if you persist in Sadhana for some time, verily, the joy of it shall descend upon you unsolicited.

In performing Japam and meditation, time and other conveniences are indeed necessary, but Smaran and Manan (constant remembrance and contemplation of God) waits for no such conditions. Whether at work or no, this you can do always, even when you are dining or sitting alone. You must cultivate this habit; and whenever you become an adept in it, know that you have made a fair advance in mind towards God. And according to Sri Ramanuja such an uninterrupted flow of thought is called Dhyana (meditation).

I wonder why you are so much afraid of work. (Pointing to Swami P.) They are all saintly men; you must at once do whatever they ask you to do. This will surely bring you good. But if you disobey you shall never make any spiritual advancement what-so-ever. Therefore I command you, my boy, to obey them implicitly and this is the sincerest advice that I can give you. Oh, what a huge lot of work we had to do under the Divine dispensation! Even as a Sadhu we had to be involved in litigations and frequently visit the lawyers' place seeking their legal advice. For all that we cannot say that any evil result has ever come out of our works: for we knew that all works were His.

II

[Seeing a small bottle broken by a monastic disciple through inadvertence] Lo! The bottle is broken;—all this is very bad habit. With such an unsettled mind

you work! Methinks you think of a hundred other things while engaged in a work. But secular or sacred, nothing great can be achieved with such an unsteady mind. Whether it is a noble undertaking or an humble one, it must be done with the utmost care and attention. And let it be known that those who are steady in secular works are also steady in their spiritual exercises.

If you desire to do a work in the right manner, you must hold these two great principles in view. In the first place you must possess a profound regard for the work undertaken, and secondly you must be quite indifferent to the fruit thereof. Then alone can you do a work in the proper way. This is called the secret of Karmayoga. And you can avert all disinclination and unpleasantness for work if you only consider it as belonging to God. It is when you forget this secret that you become diseased in mind; with a diseased mind spiritual unfoldment or secular advancement you can prosper in neither.

Under the impulse of name and fame, it is indeed easier to perform a magnificent work, but through such performance you cannot appraise the value of a man as he really is. In order to do so, you are to examine his daily works; for it is the ordinary actions of a man through which the real man in him is revealed unto us. Through such actions alone can you know how far the man has developed himself in character. A true Karmayogin (selfless worker) would ever lose himself heart and soul in any undertaking even though it is one of a most inferior kind. He is never actuated by the least desire of winning cheap popular applause.

Who cannot do a work if it is to his own choice? Where then lies the difference between a Karmayogin and an ordinary layman? A Karmayogin must welcome any work that may fall to his share and gradually adjust himself according to the requirements. Simply doing any work again, is not sufficient; it must be done

disinterestedly—in the holy name of the Lord. A Karma-yogin must keep three-fourths of his mind fixed in God, and with the remaining one-fourth he shall do whatever he is to do. If you follow this rule, then alone can you do your work in proper manner; and your mind too shall become expanded and you shall feel great joy in you. But on the other hand, if you go to do a work forgetting God, egotism and pride will easily take the better of you, and quarrels and dissensions will ensue disturbing the equanimity of your mind. Therefore I tell you whether at work or not, do never forget God. And to effect this attitude, you must stick to your Bhajanam (spiritual practices) by all means.

SRI KRISHNA AND HIS MESSAGE

The history of India is but a history of the consecrated lives of a galaxy of saints and shining spiritual figures of the land. It has ever been the peculiar privilege of the Indian people to witness in every phase of their historical evolution an outstanding personality whose spiritual activities shaped the destiny of the country and contributed to the intensification of their cultural heritage handed down from hoary antiquity. With the march of time history is thus repeating itself in every age with added light and shade. The present static and somnolent state of India is but a replica of the past with slight variations. To-day India stands at a cross-road of her eventful career. Time has already wrought many a revolutionary change in the outlook of Indian life. The darkness of ignorance sits as a mighty incubus on the minds of the inert masses. Everywhere, deep marks of despair and helplessness as well as of a woful lack of confidence in the dynamic strength of Indian culture are writ large on the forehead of the hapless children of the soil;—the whole atmosphere is filled with a profound sense of humiliation. But even in the midst of these crowded misfortunes of modern India, it would give us an unfailing inspiration to recall that India that has fallen to-day, had had the vitality to give birth to a splendid

civilisation, at once original and unique in its character, and that she was the proud mother of many a luminous personality whose achievements in the various realms of human thought are still the wonders of the modern world. "This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first sprang up enquiries into the nature of man, and into the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and here the highest ideas of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points." In such a land in long past years,—away back where tradition even fails to peep into its gloom, was born one of the brightest personalities to fulfil the multifold needs of humanity. It was our beloved Sri Krishna—the harbinger of peace and harmony, love and righteousness. India was then but a congeries of States struggling for supremacy. The long-standing feud between the Kurus and the Panchalas and the bitter animosity prevailing among the then ruling princes of India transformed the land into a veritable theatre of bloody warfare. The land of righteousness became the land of vice and unrest. The pitiful cry of the oppressed and the helpless found no response in the hearts of 'the custodians of law and order'. The laws of morality were cast to the four winds, and the tyranny and arrogance of many a self-forgetful autocrat, masquerading as benevolent monarchism, strutted through the land to the horror and disgust of the peace-loving people. Multifarious were the sects that broke their heads against the dead walls of fanaticism and bigotry. The country indeed sorely needed the advent of one who would be a perfect synthesis of the varied ideals of mankind and a fulfilment of the complicated problems and needs of the age. The birth of a Saviour was therefore awaited with a thrill of breathless expectancy, and the advent of Sri Krishna ushered in an era of unprecedented joy and relief to the suffering souls. He was born within the prison-bars of Mathura—the capital-city of the tyrant king, Kamata. The elemental fury was never more terrifying, and the gloom never more palpable than they were at the time of his birth. The stormy atmosphere was in fact symbolic of the profound unrest that agitated the hearts

of the millions of India. But the prison-walls were no bar to him, for the Soul of India can never be kept confined within the stony bounds of any earthly dungeon. The whole nature conspired, as it were, for the safety of the child and all the diabolical designs of the Satanic king, Kamsa, to crush him ended in a huge fiasco.

It is the standing assurance of the Scriptures that whenever this world of ours needs an adjustment on the spiritual plane, Divinity that dwells on the top-most crest of the spiritual wave of humanity incarnates himself for the restoration of order and peace in the land. To many an Anglicised Indian who draws his inspiration from the materialism of the West, the life of Sri Krishna would seem to be an incredible mass of myths, for it has not yet had the pious sanction of the sceptic Occidentalists ! The Brindavan-leela of Sri Krishna has particularly been the target of trenchant and sarcastic criticism at the hands of some fastidious moralists, who, in their anxiety to establish their position as 'the upholders of the ancient Faith', have not felt the least scruple to paint Sri Krishna and his playmates as so many prototypes of Belial, and have gone to the length of damning the principal actors in the drama of Kurukshetra as a band of non-Aryans without even the faintest tinge of rudimentary civilisation ! Needless to say, the studied ignorance of history as well as the bare-faced bigotry of the unthinking critics have blinded them to the transcendent idealism set up before humanity by the Beauty-Boy of Brindavan in the varied fields of his activity. It must be the good luck of the lovers of Truth that while waves of conquest and religious fanaticism, and along with these, millions of lives, and glorious spiritual movements, have been swept away, the message of Sri Krishna remains still a living reality. It is only to the sense-bound dunceheads and pampered wisacres of the commercial world who are more concerned with the gratification of the senses than the realisation of the Spirit, that it must ever remain a sealed book and an incomprehensible mystery : for who else than the chaste and the pure—one who has transcended the limitations of the senses and become intoxicated with the love divine, can ever dare to enter into the sacred play-ground of Sri Krishna's spiritual activities that embody in fact a most sublime illustration of "Love for love's sake" ? The music of his mystic

flute is an ever-present reality to every seeker of truth and of profound spiritual import to every sincere soul. Śrīmad Bhagavatam—one of the monumental works of an Indian genius—furnishes a delightful picture of the Rāsa-dance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Flute in hand on one beautiful autumnal night when the whole nature was steeped in silvery silence, when the fragrant flowers were opening up with the sweet kisses of the wooing breeze and the gentle Jamunā was singing the glories divine, Śrī Kṛṣṇa—the master-musician of the universe, seated himself near the forest of Brindāvan on the bank of the Jamunā. The dulcet melody of the flute rolling out in an unceasing stream of beauty thrilled the whole of the charming Arcadia,—kissed every sense of the unwary Gopā-maidens whose unsophisticated hearts became tense with excitement; an unprecedented yearning seized every heart for union with the Beloved. No physical consciousness was there to prevent such a union,—heart only spoke to the heart; and all earthly considerations were cast off in that moment of supreme spiritual longing. What a tremendous madness—a madness that was only witnessed in the sacred lives of Śrī Chaitanya and Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa of hallowed memory; for it hardly comes over any other ordinary mortals with the ideas of sex constantly boiling within.

The unique love of the Gopis opened a new chapter in the history of religion; for it was for the first time in the annals of mankind that the ideal of love for love's sake, work for work's sake and duty for duty's sake fell upon the soil of India from the lips of the greatest of incarnations—Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It solved once for all the eternal conflict between the Dualists and the Monists—the followers of the Personal and the Impersonal aspects of the Lord. Personal God is the highest conception of human nature and shall remain a paramount necessity so long as different classes of human minds exist on the face of the earth. The Gopis in their self-effacing drunkenness of love got beyond every form of physical consciousness and there came a moment when, through madness of spiritual ecstasy, the face of every one looked like Śrī Kṛṣṇa and their very soul became tinged with the Kṛṣṇa-colour. What a splendid illustration of the gradual ascent of the human soul from the gross to the fine, from the fine to the finer until it merges

into the Absolute! Is it not an unpardonable vanity on the part of the blind materialists with the ideas of sex, of name and fame, bubbling up every minute in the heart to dare to criticise and understand the transcendent love of the Gopis? The spotless purity of the eternally immaculate Suka Deva—the maiden exponent of the self-abnegating love of the Gopis, is the only passport to the mystic realm of Brindavan. The melodious strain of the divine flute is still a living force. “Within our heart of hearts is the forest of Brindavan in which the sacred river of love—Jamuna, flows lapping with thrills of joy, the bank of bowery lawn where Krishna—our soul, with his Gopis—our ensouled mental aspirations, is performing his ever favourite, never-ending Rasha-dance.” The more we realise it the more do we feel elevated on a higher spiritual plane. The humanity has forgotten the ideal and the world has become the play-ground of the worst instincts of human nature. Let us love the Beloved, for by loving Him alone can we love our fellow creatures and attain to the oneness of human existence.

The annihilation of the tyrant-king, Kamsa who sucked like vampire the life-blood of his people at Mathura and the restoration of Ugrasena by Sri Krishna to the throne put a seal upon the orgy of tyranny in the land of the Yadavas. With a marvellous spirit of non-attachment did the Sannyasin-hero snap away the silken tie of the happy association of Brindavan, abnegate the pleasures of the crown and jump into the vortex of fresh activity. The duties of a mightier import loomed larger and larger before his spiritual vision and the golden memories of his boyhood could no longer chain him down to the past. The complex problems of the then Indian life roused him to a vision of a mighty empire to be established on the ashes of villany and vice that ran rampant in the country. The clouds thickened more and more in the political firmament of India. The Pandavas, the most innocent of the Kuru-race were deprived of the legitimate share of their kingdom by wily Duryodhan in collusion with some of his powerful satellites. The heart of the just and the law-abiding revolted in righteous indignation against the inhumanity meted out to the sons of Pandu, and the whole hosts of the kings from the Himalayas down to the Cape Comorin and from Gandhar to Prag-Yotish participated in this

titanic struggle and ranged themselves on one side or the other to fight out the issue on the memorable field of Kurukshetra. Duryodhan and Arjuna, the two stalwarts of the hostile camps hastened simultaneously to the court of Sri Krishna at Dwaraka for military assistance in the impending struggle. Duryodhan retired satisfied with the invincible army of Sri Krishna; but Arjuna would want nothing—nay, not even the rest of humanity on his side save and except the loving guidance of Sri Krishna—the greatest of the spiritual heroes. The union of the two souls is indeed one of the greatest historical events of the past. The accumulated wrongs of the Kauravas, the organised vandalism of their confreres and, above all, the insult and humiliation to which Draupadi—the symbol of purity and innocence was subjected,—the gravest wrong that could ever be done to the womanhood of India, all flashed before their vision one by one. Sri Krishna and Arjuna foresaw the grave possibilities of the coming Armageddon, and the two souls mingled in that historic moment into a mighty stream on the crest of the Raivataka, that subsequently poured down upon the land in a deluge and swept away the sinful accretions of ages from the bosom of India.

Sri Krishna made a last effort to sound a death-knell to the impending conflict between the two parties and as an accredited plenipotentiary of the Pandavas stood before the monster gathering of the Kauravas with the message of peace: "Make peace," said he, "O prince of the Bharat race, with the wise, brave and energetic Pandavas, great in learning and self-subjugation. From peace would proceed happiness to kinsmen and friends, aye my dear, to the whole world. The man who having heard the advice of his friends followeth it not, is tormented in the end." His pregnant words created a stir and commotion amongst the shining lights of the Kaurava assembly, but Duryodhan was not prepared to part with even the strip of land covered by the point of a needle. Thus the hostility became inevitable and the two armies stood unbuttoned in the field for the final event. It was here in the midst of the din and bustle of the army, the clatter and whirr of chariots and the neighs and snorts of the excited chargers that Sri Krishna sang the Song Immortal—the celebrated Bhagavat Gita, laid bare all the mysteries of human existence and chalked out for humanity

the paths for final deliverance. Sri Krishna realised that the compassion which Arjuna felt for his kinsmen was but an outcome of his momentary weakness. The secrets of true Knowledge, Work and Devotion were unfolded before him one after the other, and it was pointed out in a synthetic way that the different paths suited, to the different temperaments of the struggling aspirants led but to the same goal. Man through ignorance has completely identified himself with his body and the senses, and thus has become a subject to an interminable cycle of births and deaths. But the real Self of man is neither born nor susceptible to any change or decay. It is beginningless and ever-existent. "If the weapons can not cut, the fire cannot burn, water can not wet and the wind cannot dry." It stands deathless and ever-effulgent in the midst of endless changes of phenomena. It is only nescience that creates a dichotomy in what would otherwise appear to be a unitary experience. The Karma-yogin through perfect desirelessness, and dedication of all the fruits of his actions to the lotus-feet of the Lord, the Jnani by dint of his unerring discrimination between the real and the unreal, the Noumenon and the phenomenon and the Bhakta by means of his unqualified love and absolute dependence upon his Beloved, are able to cross the limitless ocean of births and deaths and reach the supreme goal of all human aspirations. The teachings had their desired effect. The gloom of weakness that gathered before the vision of Arjuna was dissipated and he was filliped up to the highest pitch of activity; for he knew that he was merely an instrument in the hand of the Lord, and no actions, good or evil, would bind his soul to the earth. The compunction that overpowered his mind in the battle-field sprang up from the predominance of Tamas; for the man of Sattva-Guna is equally calm and unperturbed in all situations in life—whether it be prosperity or adversity. That was why Sri Krishna had thundered forth at the very outset :—

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।

अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकर्मजुन ॥

कैव्यं मास्म गमः पार्यनैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥

"In such a strait, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Aryanlike, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment

of heaven? Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies. ”

In these stirring lines lie imbedded in fact the whole message of the Bhagavat Gita. Man is the architect of his own destiny. It is only the colossal ignorance of the real nature of man that has bound him with the shackles of weakness and fear. Never did Indians stand more in need of this gospel of strength than they do now. It is indeed a pity that the children of the knowers of Brahman lie prostrate to-day at the feet of Occidentalism and are seized with an undignified fear that once stupefied the sturdy mentality of Arjuna in the midst of an impending struggle. It is the knowledge of the deathless glory of the soul, which is the desideratum of the present age; for it is this knowledge alone that shall furnish strength to the drooping soul in every walk of life. Indeed, the battle must be fought out in the very depths of the human soul; for then and then alone the cannon-ball shall stand as no terror to him and the death will come but as ‘a welcome guest to his door’. क्लृप्तं माम् गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते No other finer words were ever uttered in the whole world of scripture. It is quite unworthy of the Indians to stoop to weakness and fear while their own forbears did score victory through sheer soul-force and indomitable courage. Let every one be inspired with the sublime idealism of the Bhagavat Gita and nerved to lion’s courage to fight out the grave issues of the modern age in the sacred Kurukshetra of his own heart; for the victory is the meed of the brave and the heroic, and not of the weak and the faint-hearted.

The great war of Kurukshetra was fought and won. Evil was sacrificed at the altar of Good and the Pandavas came out victorious in the deadly conflict. The great task of Sri Krishna was done. The kingdom of righteousness was established, and order and peace were restored in the realm of unrest and chaos. He harmonised all the conflicting religious systems by placing before humanity a comprehensive religious ideal in his immortal Song Celestial,—the essence of the Upanishads and the guide to the realm of Truth. A perfect specimen of mankind in whom the ideals of a Sannyasin and a householder commingled in a beautiful synthesis, and whose whole life was but an illustration of

the spirit of renunciation and service, love and disinterested work, he stands for all ages as the ultimate refuge and solace of every longing soul. Though acclaimed as the greatest among men by the whole host of the Indian princes congregated at Indraprastha for the Rajashuya sacrifice, it was he who voluntarily undertook the humblest function of washing the feet of the assembled guests! What a sweet and harmonious blending of all the aspects of an ideal life in Sri Krishna—the teacher of humanity! “Blessed indeed is he who has learned to worship him with the flowers of faith, regard and love; for he is the soul of the entire cosmos and has given us the best and the most universal religion.” He has brought out and popularised the grand truths of the Upanishads as an exponent of the Religion Eternal whose broad nature stands unparalleled amongst all the religions of the world. May the blessings of Sri Krishna alight upon us and enable us to follow the path of truth and work out the sacred mission of our race for which we are born in this Punyabhumi—India, the blessed land of the East.

IDEAL OF LIFE

By Brahmachari Srish Chaitanya

Man is the most perfect of all creatures, occupying the highest rung in the scale of creation. In him there is the divine aspect as well as the animal instinct. Although man, in common with the animal creation possesses the natural propensities of eating, sleeping and procreation, he differs from them in one important respect. This is reason or the power of discrimination. Through a proper use of this power man can approach God, visualize Him, nay even become one with Him, while an improper use of it leads him imperceptibly to the nadir of moral turpitude. From the earliest of times this creation has been the object of perception to both man and beast; but while to the beast nothing appealed and it remained quite contented, man grew restless under the impact of an inner urge for wider and greater outlook and thirsted for more knowledge. He began to question within himself: “What is all this? Is there any one at its back?” Those and many such questions began to crop up from within and troubled him day and night. By observation he found out that the external phenomena, though apparently various and separate, were not only not unconnected but wonderfully systematised and well-regulated. And their uniformity

and unerring regularity revealed to him the existence of a grand scheme. Turning his attention inward he discovered through introspection the same kind of regularity and uniformity and the same purpose dominating the mental phenomena. And the results arrived at by these observations made him more and more inquisitive. More doubts sprang up in his mind and once again he began to cogitate within himself : "Who is at the back of all these phenomena, mental and physical?" And the answer came forth from within : "There must be a person or force at the back of this universe ; and it must be discovered."

As a result of these unceasing speculations two enquiries were started,—one directed to the physical world and the other to the mind. The former enquiry ended in the discovery of certain truths which revealed to man that nature was the depository of all beauty. He was fascinated by this captivating beauty of nature and lost sight of the object of his search. This sense of beauty took possession of his mind and it created in him a strong and uncontrollable desire for sense-enjoyment. It made him selfish, and he dived deep into the vortex of sense-pleasures and completely lost himself in the eddies thereof. Surely this was a moral death to his noble enterprise. And lo ! to-day these truths about external phenomena have proved a veritable menace to the humanity at large in as much as they have become deadly engines of destruction at the hands of the 'civilised nations' of the world. These material achievements which ought to have been directed towards the unfoldment of the divine mystery, have in the name of progressive science gained a mastery over the spiritual sense of men and gone so far as to question the very existence of God. Thus the seeker stumbled upon the externals of the phenomenal world and could not proceed towards the ultimate principle—the Noumenon and thus the flood-gate of spiritual life was locked for him.

But the other enquirer threaded quite a different course. He abstracted himself altogether from the panorama of nature's beauty and slowly and steadily began the introspective analysis of his mental phenomena. But to his utter surprise and disappointment he found that his mind was the most turbulent and unyielding factor constantly ready as it were to frustrate the noble aspiration of his heart. He found also that its nature was to drag him always outward through the senses to death. But his higher nature lying dormant within revealed itself and impelled him to be patient and to persevere. Thus after many a hard struggle the mind became docile and friendly and he was vouchsafed a faint glimpse of the great truth for which he had struggled so much. He did not stop there but strove on and on until, after many a severe

ordeal, he reached a positive state of Consciousness where neither the mind nor the intellect could penetrate. It was then that the mystery of the universe was revealed to him and the doubts and the knots of his heart were now all gone. His search after truth was thus crowned with success. He now proclaimed to the humanity at large that God is the underlying principle of this mysterious creation, and nothing but an intimate knowledge of Him can solve the problems of human life and bestow eternal peace and happiness on the thirsting soul. With the clarion call he proclaimed :

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा
 आये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्युः ॥
 वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम्
 आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तर ।
 तमेव विदित्वातिमृन्युमेति
 नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥

"Hear, ye children of Immortal Bliss, ye residents of region celestial ! I have found the Ancient One Who is beyond all darkness and effulgent as the burning sun. Knowing Him alone, ye shall be saved from death once for all; for there is no other way than this for the attainment of Bliss Eternal." This is in fact the highest ideal of human life.

This is the message that the Rishis of India delivered to the world and the seers of all countries and of all ages have one and all echoed the same. The avatars, the mangods,—Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mahomet, Chaitanya and others had no other message than this. Christ's exhortation to his disciples to seek the kingdom of heaven instead of 'these things' which the 'nations of the earth' hanker after points to the same ideal. Sri Krishna, the unique charioteer-guide of Arjuna proclaimed in the battle-field of Kurukshetra that in God alone the ultimate refuge is to be sought and that by his grace alone supreme peace can be attained. The latest of these mangods, Sri Ramakrishna whose voice is still ringing in our ears and whose 'living testimony' are still with us declared the very same message : "God alone is real and He is to be realised first."

An examination of the world itself leads but to the same conclusion. Is not this entire creation perishable ? Do we not see the seal of death imprinted on all things ? Will our dear ones, son and wife live for ever ? Will our beautiful houses, the palaces replete with enchanting decorations exist for ever ? Will this name and fame after which we run so madly follow us after death ? Will this our beloved body which we so tenderly nurture last for ever ? Rightly does the poet Grey speak out the truth in his Elegy—

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
 All that wealth and all that beauty ever gave,
 Await alike the inevitable hour ;
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

To death everything must be reduced and to it every one is equal, rich or poor, king or beggar. Death brings us all to the same level. The most autocratic monarch or Napoleon or Alexander, the most powerful government with its vast naval and military resources and its deadly machine guns—all shrivel into nothingness before the majesty of His power. Our thousand and one crooked diplomacies can not save us from "the inevitable hour". But there is one transcendent Reality which is constant and is beyond the phenomena of change and death; and It is God. If we can once reach Him, there shall be then no more fear, no more death, no more destruction. He is therefore our goal and ideal.

But unless some idea of the nature of God is formed it is not possible for man to worship Him. Therefore such questions as—What is the nature of God ? How is He to be realised?—naturally crop up in the minds of men. The Rishis of India, according to the extent of their spiritual experiences have described God as *Sachchidananda*. Some have realised Him as Existence Absolute, having neither birth nor death. He is unchangeable and therefore permanent; some others have realised God as the one Fountain-head of Knowledge Absolute, intensely bright and dazzling. "He is self-effulgent: the sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars; not even the lightnings, much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after him; by his light all this is lighted." "If he is known everything else becomes known. He is Omniscience." Others again have realised Him as Bliss Absolute, the Source of all joy, being ever happy and cheerful. To them this Bliss is Brahman; and of this Bliss, these creatures are verily born; by Bliss they live and into Bliss again they depart. They have further declared that God incarnates himself in every age for the good of the world—to protect the holy and punish the wicked. Thus we find that God is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. These are the three aspects of God; and the aspirant can attain to Him through the realisation of any of these three aspects of the Lord.

Such a benign Providence is not the monopoly of a particular section of humanity. "God is everybody's own," said Sri Ramakrishna "as the moon is every child's. Everybody has an undisputed right to pray to Him; out of his grace he manifests himself to all that call upon Him." He is the father and mother of all and as such everyone has a right to go to Him. Even the most wicked and the wretched have access to God

and can worship Him; He makes no distinction whatsoever between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, man and woman, the touchables and the 'untouchables', the learned and the unlearned, the white and the coloured. The *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavatam* and other Pouranic scriptures of the Hindus have gone a step further; for according to them not only man alone but even animals are entitled to call upon the Lord: for He loves all alike.

But can a man, limited both physically and mentally realise the Unlimited? The Upanishad declares that through his grace alone he can be known, and not by any other means. "This Atman," it says, "can not be attained by the study of the Vedas, nor by intellect, nor even by much learning of the sacred scriptures. He is known only by those to whom He chooses to reveal Himself." So says Sri Krishna in the Bhagavat Gita: "By His grace alone, Arjuna, thou shalt attain supreme peace—the eternal abode." His grace is therefore essential in realising Him. But some preparatory spiritual exercises are of indispensable necessity to become the recipient of His grace. The Upanishads style them as "Tapas" (spiritual practices) and make it distinctly clear that this is necessary so far as it serves to purify the mind of the aspirant of all its impurities, of the little ego that binds him down to the frailties that flesh is heir to. For He is absolutely free and unconditioned and 'beyond Tapas'. Therefore although Tapas has no absolute value, it is essential for the purification of the mind. As the Sruti tells us: "God cannot be attained by him who does not refrain from sins and whose senses are not restrained. Nor can He be realised by one who has not attained mental equilibrium. But he who has a strong discrimination, is ever pure and has controlled his mind reaches that goal from whose bourne no traveller returneth. Verily, He reveals Himself to a pure mind." Hence the necessity of Tapas. And for this, four paths are mentioned in the scriptures—Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

The Rajayogin in trying to realise his goal restrains his Chitta—the Manas, the Buddhi, and Ahankara) from taking various forms or Vrittis. And for this purpose he adopts an eightfold means of Yama, Niyama, etc. The Jnanayogin on the other hand does not take cognisance of this world which he considers to be but an outcome of Maya (Ignorance). He resorts to the path of discrimination and works towards a positive state of Consciousness by an elimination of what is unreal until at last he gazes upon the very face of the Reality.

The Karmin realises his ideal through work; for no man can live for a moment without work. But the fruits of this Karma he should consecrate to the feet of the Lord; otherwise they themselves will be the

veritable source of bondage in the world. So did Sri Krishna point out to his 'dear one':—"Do thou, O Arjuna, always perform actions which are obligatory without attachment;—by performing action without attachment, one attains to the highest." Thus it is that disinterested work alone terminates the cycles of birth and death and leads the Karmayogin to the highest state of realisation.

A Bhakta worships God as the embodiment of bliss eternal and establishes a sweet relationship with Him according to the nature of his own mental aspiration. A spirit of complete self-abnegation comes over him, for the devotee dedicates everything to God ;—even his body mind and all his near and dear ones. "Bhaktiyoga", says Sri.Ramakrishna, "is specially adapted to Kaliyuga. This is the *Yugadharma*,—the way best suited to man in the present age."

These are the four principal ways of Sadhana embodied in the scriptures for the realisation of the Truth Absolute. It is, however, not to be understood that they are absolutely independent of one another but they are inter-related. They are differently named only because of the predominance of the particular feature present in each of them ; but none can take to them without the help of a proper Guru (spiritual guide). For many are the pitfalls that a man has to cross before reaching his goal. It is indeed very hard to find out such a guide ; But when the spiritual yearning becomes intense God Himself procures for the devotee everything that is needed for the fruition of his spiritual aspiration.

It should therefore be our unfailing endeavour not to allow ourselves to be entangled in the meshes of the objects of sense-enjoyment, but advance inward in search of the Truth until the goal is reached. We should never lose sight of the fact that to be born as man is a rare privilege, which should never be abused but be turned to good account. The Rishis of India—than whom none else in this world have understood and solved the problem of life so well—have said: "If a man realises God here, there is the everlasting life for him ; but if he fails, only destruction will await him." Let us keep these glowing words always fresh in our minds and mould our life accordingly. Let us once more remember the triumphant call of the Rishi : "Knowing Him alone, Ye shall be saved from death once for all."

"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

THE AWAKENING OF KUNDALINI

By Dr. A. R. S. Sundaram Bhishak

"The rousing of the Kundalini is the one and only way to attaining Divine Wisdom, super-conscious perception, realisation of the Spirit"—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Kundalini is described as a Shakti like a thread in the lotus and resplendent having its seat in the Muladhara and it is the mightiest manifestation of creative power in the body. Sometimes it is described to be bright as fire and possessing the heat of many suns. It is also generally described as a serpent coiled up three and half times round the Lingam and sleeping above the Kanda which is described to be four fingers in length and breadth and corresponds to a position two fingers below the penis and two fingers above the anus. While asleep it takes hold of its tail with its mouth and closes the way to the Brahma-randhra at Brahmadvāra—the lowest end of the Sushumna. And the rousing up of this Kundalini from its deep slumber and raising it through the Brahmanadi to the highest centre the Sahasrara, and making it stay there permanently, when the aspirant becomes a Jivan-mukta, is the highest aim of a Yogin. During the passage of the Kundalini through the Sushumna to the Sahasrara, it gathers more strength from the different centres, through which it passes. Further as the Kundalini ascends from centre to centre, layer after layer of the mind, as it were, opens up and this universe is perceived by the Yogin in its causal form and when the Kundalini reaches the Ajna Chakra, Divine Knowledge comes to the Yogin. And when it reaches the Sahasrara the Yogin is said to attain the super-conscious state or Samadhi. In this state the Yogin becomes unconscious of this world and remains so until the Kundalini returns to its abode.

Before going into the details of the awakening of this Power, it will be indispensable to have an elementary knowledge of that portion of the Tantric Anatomy which deals with the part of the human system that is affected with this practice. The first essential thing is to have an idea of the six Chakras or Padmas as termed in the Tantras. Going up from the lowest, they are named serially as Muladhara, Svadhishtana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna. These Padmas or lotuses are said to hang like beads along the Sushumna Nadi with their faces downwards.

The first of these is Muladhara, the name of which is derived from its being the original abode of the Kundalini (Mula-root; adhar—

the support). It is said to be triangular in shape and is situated in the midmost portion of the body with the apex downwards. Muladhara is situated 2 fingers' breadth below the base of the sexual organ and 2 fingers' breadth above the anus. Prithvi is the Tattvam of this Chakra, which is of yellow colour. There are four forms of bliss in coincidence with the four petals this lotus is supposed to consist of *viz.*, Yogananda, Paramananda, Sahajananda and Virananda and four letters namely, Va, Sha, Sha and Sa. In the centre of the lotus is Svayambhu Lingam, which is of a ruddy brown colour. At the base of the Lingam is the opening of the end of Chitra Nadi which is called the Brahma-dvara or the door of the Brahman. Through this door only the Kundalini ascends. The presiding Deity is Brahma.

The next Chakra is Svadhisthana, which means one's own place. It is situated at the base of the sexual organ, below the navel. It is a six-petalled lotus corresponding to which there are six qualities namely credulity, suspicion, disdain, delusion, false-knowledge, pitilessness and six letters namely Ba, Bha, Ma, Ya, Ra and La. The Tattva of this Chakra is Ap (water) and this Chakra is of white colour. In it are the Devatas, Maha Vishnu, Lakshmi and Sarasvathi within the semi-circular space in the pericarp. In front resides the Lord, Varuna. The presiding Deity is Vishnu.

The third centre is Manipura, which means full of rays, the name being derived from the Shakti shedding lustre at this centre. It is situated above the last at a distance of 8 digits, and in the region of the navel. Tejas is the Tattva of this Chakra. It has ten gunas and ten letters in coincidence with the ten petals that this lotus is said to consist of. The gunas are shame, fickleness, jealousy, desire, laziness, sadness, ignorance, aversion, disgust and fear. The letters are Da, Dha, Na, Ta, Thah, Da, Dha, Pa, Pa and Pha. This is red in colour, which is an astral image seen by the Yogins. Within this lotus is the triangular-shaped Agnimandalam. This region which is solar is said to absorb, as if drinking, the nectar or ambrosia which is being constantly shed from the region of the Chandramandalam in the Sahasrara. The presiding Deity is Rudra.

The fourth in the series is Anahata, where the Kundalini passes in the manifestation of sound in virtue of which the term Anahata is given to this Centre. It is situated 10 digits above from Manipura in the region of the heart. This should not be confounded with the heart lotus. It has 12 letters and 12 qualities corresponding to the 12 petals that this Chakra is supposed to consist of. The twelve qualities are hope, care or anxiety, endeavour, selfishness, hypocrisy, rancour, conceit, discrimination, covetousness, duplicity, indecision,

and regret. The 12 letters are Ka, Kha, Ga, Gha, Nga, Cha, Chha, Ja, Jha, Nya, Ta, Tha. It is of smoky colour and the Tattwa is Vayu. The presiding Deity is Isha, Overlord of the first three Chakras.

Visuddha is the fifth lotus, which is situated at the lower end of the throat at a distance of 10 digits above from Anahata. Visuddha means place of purity. It has 16 petals corresponding to which there are 16 gunas and 16 letters. The sixteen letters are from 'A' to the end of the vowels. It is of white colour and the Tattwa is Akasa. The Deity is Maheswara. Within this lotus there is a triangular region within which is Shiva known as Arddhanarishvara. Near Shiva is Shakti Shakini dressed in yellow garb.

The next and the sixth Chakra is Ajna ; it is a lotus of two white petals between the eyebrows on which are the white letters Ha and Ksha. This is also called Paramakula and Muktatriveni. It is of ruby colour and the presiding Deity is Sadasiva. The Tattwa of this Chakra is the subtle mind with four divisions namely Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara. Within this lotus is the Tejomaya Lingam in the form of Pranava. It is here that the Yogin at the time of his final exit from the stage of this world, places its Prana, and enters the supreme primordial Deva (Purana Purusha).

Thus we have understood something about the six Chakras. There is yet another Chakra which is the highest, and is situated in the top centre of the head. The letter is OM. The colour is that of one crore suns' light. The presiding deities are all the devatas and one's own Guru. So far for Chakras. Now we shall try to understand something about Nadis.

Of the 72,000 Nadis said to spread over the whole human system, fourteen are important. They are Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Saraswati, Varuni, Kuhu, Sankhini, Payasvini, Alambusa, Gandhari, Pusha, Hastijhiva, Yasavini and Visvodari. Of these, the first three are specially important, namely Ida, Pingala and Sushumna.

Of the latter three Nadis, the Sushumna extends from the Muladhara to the twelve-petalled lotus in the pericarp of the Sahasrara and runs through the interior of the Morudanda-the spinal column. Within the Sushumna is Vajrini Nadi within which is Chitra. The interior of the latter is called Brahuna Nadi. The opening of the Chitra is called Brahmadvaya, through which the awakened Kundalini ascends.

Ida (Moon) and Pingala (Sun) take their origin at Muladhara from the Kanda and meet Sushumna here in virtue of which this place is called Yuktatriveni. This is allegorically hinted in the Puranas as

Prayag, the place of meeting of the three sacred rivers—Ganga (Ida), Yamuna (Pingala) and Sarasvati (Sushumna). The Ida and Pingala are the left and right sympathetic cords respectively on each side of the "fiery" Sushumna and they go straight along the Sushumna on either side of it up to the Ajna Chakra. Here they form themselves like a pair of scissors, enter Sushumna making a plaited knot of three and then separating themselves go to both the nostrils each going to the opposite nostril of its origin, i.e., the Ida takes its origin near the right scrotum and crossing itself at the Ajna Chakra goes to the left nostril, and similarly the Pingala on the other side. The plaited knot of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna at the Ajna Chakra is termed Mukta-triveni.

As already noticed the awakening of Kundalini is the most important practice in Yoga without which success in Yoga cannot be achieved and without knowing which no man can claim himself as a true Yogin. By knowing this one becomes a Jivan-mukta, liberated in this birth. The awakening of Kundalini is a very great thing and the aspirant gains for every step he advances.

The chief symptoms of the rousing of Kundalini are a good appetite and diminution of excretions, healthy complexion, bodily vigour, hearing of all sorts of internal sounds called Nadas. An aspirant leading the life of a strict Brahmacharin with a very moderate and nutritious diet, is said to obtain perfection within 45 days' steady practice. By this practice the impurities of the Nadis are first purified, and the aspirant is not perishable like ordinary mortals. One thing to be noticed here is that when Kundalini ascends, the lower limbs become cold as well as other bodily parts which it has passed through in succession. But the upper part of the body will be lustrous and warm.

Mainly there are two ways of awakening this Kundalini. The one is by repeating the mystic Melana Mantram. Melana means joining. This Mantram is a power which is thought-movement veiled by and expressed in speech and is identical with the manifested Sabda Brahman. As Kundalini is both light (Yotirmayi) and Mantram (Mantra-mayi), the Japam or repetition of Mantram is used in the process of rousing the sleeping "Serpent Power" who lies coiled up at the sacral plexus (Muladhara), the lowest point of the vertebrate column. Its object is the rousing and ultimate emergence of the Kundalini Shakti in Purusha when Samadhi is attained. This Kundalini is the individual bodily representative of the great cosmic power which creates and sustains the universe. In short both Shiva and Shakti are Consciousness; the former is the changeless static aspect of Consciousness

and Shakti is the kinetic aspect of the same Consciousness. Thus when this individual Shakti manifesting as the individual Consciousness (Jiva) is merged in the Consciousness of the Supreme Shiva (Atma), the world for such a Jiva is destroyed and liberation is attained. Since this Mantram is the key to this practice, it is kept profoundly secret by the Masters and is given only to the deserving initiates. The superiority of this Melana is indescribable when it is said that it is not obtained even after hundred births and when a Yogin leading a solitary life, gets this Mantram from his Guru's mouth, then he surely obtains psychic powers as mentioned in various Yoga and Tantra literatures. As this Mantram is to be obtained from a competent Guru, we shall leave its discussion and proceed with the next one which is popular.

The second method of arousing the Kundalini is what is called Sakti-Chalana in which a spiralline movement of the abdominal muscles from left to right and right to left is made, being accompanied by a process of inhalation and the union of Prana and Apana. In practising this, two things are most essential, namely Saraswathi Chalana and the Kumbhaka. Of these, Saraswathi Chalana is described as follows :—

When the breath is passing through the Ida or left nostril, this practice should be commenced. Assuming the Padmasana one should inhale with force so that the breath goes 16 inches inside, 4 inches in excess of the usual 12 inches. Then the Yogin should bind the Saraswathi Nadi by the breath thus inhaled and by means of both the hands, having one hand on each side, should firmly hold together both his ribs near the navel and should stir up Kundalini by stirring the abdomen from right to left for nearly 48 minutes fearlessly. By this the Saraswathi is thrown out into vibration. This should be done every day. By this, various diseases of the abdomen are cured. When the Saraswathi is thrown out into vibration it acts on the Kundalini and causes it to awake from its deep slumber.

The next thing to be discussed is Kumbhaka. For this a special posture named Vajrasana is to be known. One heel should be placed below the navel and the other heel above the former. Then the aspirant should sit with his body, neck and head erect. This is Vajrasana. Now the Kumbhaka is to be studied. There are various Kumbhakas, but that which is required for us is Bhasthri, about which we shall now discuss.

Seated in Padmasana, the aspirant having closed his mouth should exhale with care through the Suryanadi. Then he should inhale with a little speed so that the Prana goes down to the navel. Then exhalation

and inhalation should be done often as the bellows of a smith, *i.e.*, keeping the air stuffed within the body and then letting it out entirely. When the belly is full of Vayu, Kumbhaka or restraint of breath should be performed by pressing the nostrils with the fingers. The main thing to be noticed is the way of breathing, *i.e.*, just like the bellows of a smith quickly. By this the gastric fire is increased and the Yogin gets the power of floating in water. Further the more important result of this practice is the destroying of phlegm which closes the mouth of Brahmanadi and piercing of the Granthis, namely Brahmagranthi, Vishnugranthi and Rudragranthi.

Having studied about the adjuncts of the Shakti Chalana, we shall go into the details of rousing the Kundalini by Shakti-Chalana.

Sitting in the Vajrasana, the Kanda (Navel) should be slowly beaten with both the feet by holding them near the ankles. Then the Bhastrika Kumbhaka should be performed as described above. The stomach should be contracted by which the Sun which is there, is also contracted, on account of which the Kundalini is roused from its deep sleep and rises up with a hissing noise as an enraged serpent.

Having aroused the Kundalini it should be taken through the various Chakras to the Sahasrara. It should never be allowed to wait on its way anywhere, but led onwards. At times like a fierce serpent beaten with a stick, this Kundalini will rush up with a tremendous force and as there is always much danger in such a strong onrush it should be very carefully guarded against. When the Kundalini is being raised and made to pierce through the various Chakras, the Sadhaka experiences a kind of bliss and power at each centre. As the Kundalini reaches each Chakra, the lotus opens out and lifts its flowers upwards.

The Kundalini on its onward march through the Sushumna will carry with it only the surplus and separable energy from the various centres on its way, while blessing them in return. Just as a traveller to a distant country takes rest in inns on his way, the Kundalini should be made to stop at various centres to add fresh energy to it. For this purpose various Bandhanas or restraints are mentioned in the Yoga Sastra, which should be practised according to the stage of ascendancy of the Kundalini along the Sushumna. For the practice of the Bandhanas, the Brahmanadi is divided into three parts from the Muladhara to the Brahmaraandhara. The first region is between the Muladhara and the Manipura and the second between the Manipura and the Visuddha, while the third is from the latter to the Sahasrara. The Bandhanas are named Mulabhandha, Udayabhandha and

Jalandharabandha in coincidence with the three resting places in the three regions, namely Muladhara, Manipura and Visuddha.

Of these, we shall study about the first Bandhana, namely Mulabhandana which literally means the restriction of the Muladhara. By practising this Bandhana the Apana is raised up, which after rising upwards reaches the sphere of Agni, whose flame now grows long. Then Apana and Agni mingle together with Prana, when they are in a heated state. Now, on account of this fiery state of the Agni the sleeping Kundalini is roused, which rises like a serpent beaten with a stick. Then the Kundalini enters the hole of Brahmanadi making a hissing noise. Therefore Yogins should practise this Mula-bhandana daily, which is as follows :—

Assuming an erect posture, the anus has to be contracted to an unusual degree and as an aid the heels of both the legs must be pressed against it; while doing so the Apana Vayu must be drawn upwards with mental effort. The Prana should be taken in and pressed down, so that both the Prana and Apana meet at Muladhara. This meeting is also explained in some literatures as Nada and Bindu. Added to these the mind is to be concentrated, when the Apana Vayu will give Nadijnyanam. Then as explained above, the sleeping Kundalini is awakened and raised along the Brahma Nadi.

After leaving the Muladhara centre the Kundalini passes through the Svadhisthana to the Manipura gathering all the energies in the Svadhisthana and invigorating and enriching itself with those energies. When the Kundalini reaches the Manipura the next Bandhana namely Udyanabhandha should be performed. The name Udyana is derived from root *Ud* which means to fly up. As such by this Bandhana the Kundalini is made to fly up with good vigour through the Sushumna. In order to perform the Udyanabandha all the nerve currents are to be collected at the Manipura. Having seated himself in the Vajra posture the aspirant should breathe in hard thereby taking the Prana down to the navel. Then by contracting and drawing the walls of the abdomen round the navel towards the back, it should be held tightly in that position without allowing any energy to go below. Meanwhile the Kundalini should be drawn up with a strong mental effort. By this the Kundalini is made to fly up straight to the Visuddha centre crossing the Anahata. The other effects of this Bandhana are good complexion, health and vigour.

The next Bandhana is Jalandhara. This acts on the networks of nerves around the Visuddha centre. Therefore a lot of currents running hither and thither around this Chakra should be gathered and

confined before they can be united to the Kundalini, on its onward march. The Jalandharabandha is practised thus :—

Sitting in Vajrasana the chin should be bent and firmly pressed against the chest at a distance of about 4 inches from the heart and the breath stopped. At the same time the pit of the stomach should be contracted and drawn against the top of the spine opposite to it. Then the Kundalini should be pushed up by the mental operation of lifting as before. By this the glands above the throat secrete, which the Yogins style as Amritasrava. In this Bandhana the act of squeezing is done. It is required in this practice that the gullet should be drawn, which is done by exhausting the lungs, when the external air presses the gullet in owing to the decrease in pressure of the air inside the lungs. When the neck is tightened whereby the energy is confined there, the Kundalini is pushed up to the Sahasrara through the Ajna Chakra, with the help of the will. Thus the raising of the Kundalini to the Sahasrara is completed.

As already stated, above all is the lotus of a thousand petals known as Sahasrara wherein is the Supreme Shiva Himself who is identical with the Brahman of the Vedas, the nature of which is Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute). It is the union of the Shakti (Kundalini Shakti) with Para Shiva or in other words the realisation of the identity of the Jiva with Brahman, which is said to be the aspirant's goal. Hence the Kundalini which has been led from the Muladhara all the way to the Sahasrara should be united with this Para Shiva, when the aspirant enjoys beatitude itself. In the awakening of the Kundalini it is described as female having three stages of life, namely when it is in the awakened state, it is in the Kumari (girl) stage, when it reaches the Anahata, it is in the Yoshit (woman-hood) stage and when it is in the Sahasrara, it is in the Pativrata (under coverture) stage.

After the Kundalini has been led to the Sahasrara it does not always stop there but tends to return to its original abode. Liberation is not gained by merely awakening and leading the Kundalini to the Sahasrara, but only when She permanently stays in the Sahasrara with Her Lord. An aspirant should make every effort to make this Shakti have a permanent stay with Her Pati, Sadashiva in the Sahasrara, when the Kundalini becomes a Pativrata. Then the aspirant forgetful of all in the world becomes a Jivan-mukta and enjoys the final beatitude and Self-consciousness.

THE ELEPHANT SET FREE *

By Swami Atulananda

Harken well, ye great ascetics, worshippers of Hari, the Lord of grace, for now I will relate to you an ancient story. Hearing this story your hearts will melt in devotion for Him whose glories surpass all human speech.

And the ascetics bowing their assent listened attentively. Then the auspicious Suka spoke;—

In former times, O ascetics, in a previous world-cycle, there lived a mighty monarch, Indradyumna by name. His territories spread over the four corners of the earth, and his wealth was unlimited. And for his justice he was loved and revered by all his subjects.

Now, one day when the king was already advanced in years, looking upon his children and grand-children, he thought, "Great power have I enjoyed and vast wealth and the best this world has to offer. Now let me spend my last years remembering Him who is the Giver of all good. Let me renounce all worldly concerns, and with my mind concentrated on Hari I shall hereafter forever dwell in His abode."

Consequently the king abdicated his sovereign power, and placing his oldest son on the throne adopted the ascetic life. In a small hermitage, nestled in a forest on the slope of a vast mountain, Indradyumna lived in solitude worshipping the Lord. His daily ablutions he performed in a sacred stream flowing near his cottage, and seated under a tree he practised self-control and various religious disciplines to subdue the passions of the flesh. And with it all he observed the vow of silence.

Now it came to pass that one day the highly renowned sage Agastya came to the hermitage with his disciples. Being a Brahmin and accustomed to respect and honour wherever he appeared, Agastya was greatly annoyed seeing the indifference of the silent ascetic, who did not even get up to welcome him. And being of an irascible temperament he flamed up in anger. Addressing Indradyumna, he exclaimed, "You wicked ascetic devoid of sense, and insulter of Brahmins, why do you sit there like a dumb animal? In your next birth you will be an elephant!" Having thus cursed the pious king, Agastya and his disciples departed.

Indradyumna, sad at heart, but knowing that all things are fore-ordained according to one's own Karma accepted in good nature the

* Adapted from the Srimad bhagavatam.

decree of destiny. The curse of a sage, he knew, is but the revelation of future events.

At the appointed time the king giving up his body entered upon the existence of an elephant. And the memory of his previous life become clouded.

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Now there was an island in the Southern Ocean. And on this island stood a great mountain with three towering summits reaching up to the skies. The summits were of gold and silver and iron. The slopes of this mountain were covered with forests with trees and shrubs bearing fruits and flowers during all the seasons. And in the valleys flowed streams of crystal water. There were also gardens and lakes where celestial nymphs sported at their pleasure. And there were caves in this mountain where lurked wild beasts. Lions roamed about, and tigers and rhinoceroses ; and all kinds of creatures inhabited the waters.

There lived in that mountain-forest a huge elephant, the leader of a herd, with many she-elephants and their young. Wherever this herd went they uprooted trees and trampled under foot whatever stood in their way. At their approach the earth trembled and the jungle animals fled in all directions. Other elephants trumpeted in anger, and lions and tigers roared, and giant serpents hissed as they fled before the approach of the herd, and its undaunted leader.

One day when the herd was greatly oppressed by the heat of the day and their throats were parched with thirst, the leader elephant smelling from afar the fragrant breeze of a lotus lake ran towards the lake followed by the herd. And as they came upon the lake they found it filled to the brim with sparkling, limpid, water. In great joy, raising the water with their trunks, the elephants drank their fill. And the leader like an affectionate father, pushing aside the lotuses, bathed the young ones, and made them drink also. And he made merry with the she-elephants splashing their bodies with the cool water.

All this time the elephants did not realize that their frolicking in the lake was causing great distress to the inhabitants of the water. Little creatures were trampled to death ; larger ones were thrown about and badly injured ; others again had to flee in fear, leaving behind their eggs or brood.

At last in despair the poor water-creatures hastened toward the king of the lake, a giant alligator as big and strong as a hippopotamus. This alligator had ruled over the lake for ever so long and no one had ever dared dispute his rights. He took his tribute, it is true, from amongst the dwellers in the lake devouring many of his subjects, but

he also protected them in time of danger when outsiders tried to invade his territory.

Now he was peacefully basking in the sun, on the muddy bank on the other side of the lake, when the excited host of creatures approached him. In their confusion they all talked at the same time, each one relating his own tale of woe.

The alligator seeing their sad plight and hearing what had happened rose in anger. "Who," he roared in a terrible voice that vibrated over the entire lake, "who are those brutal wights that dare invade my kingdom, and disturb my subjects? Come, show me where they are, and I shall teach them a lesson!" Then, led by a little minnow the alligator came to the spot.

All the elephants by this time had left the water, except the leader of the herd. Seeing this huge beast but nowise daunted, the furious king of water denizens made for the brute. Firmly embedding his strong teeth in one of the hind legs of the elephant, and tightly locking his powerful jaws, he began to pull with all his might, wishing to drown the elephant in the lake.

Then began a terrible struggle the like of which had never been witnessed before. The powerful beasts, both fired with wrath, put forth their utmost strength. They pulled and pushed and jerked each other. Sometimes the alligator seemed to gain ground; then again the elephant won back his former position. Neither was victorious.

The she-elephants shrieking in dismay, ran hither and thither. Some seizing hold of the trunk of their leader tried to pull him to the land. But no matter how they exerted themselves they could not succeed in rescuing him.

At last, however, the elephant wrenched himself free from the clutch of the alligator. But the alligator was upon him again.

Now the aspect of the combat changed. The elephant turning, faced his opponent, fire in his eyes. They charged, tusks pointed at protruding snout; they collided with a thud, the impact shaking their bodies.

So matched were they in the fight that sometimes they stopped together panting hard against each other. Then they sped up again with furious strength. Time was annihilated, a red fury possessed their minds.

Thus it went on, neither gaining victory, and mortals and immortals marvelled greatly watching the mad struggle.

At last, after a long lapse of time, the elephant began to lose strength. He staggered, tottering on his feet, gasping for breath, his

eyes blinking. The life blood flowed like water from his wounds. The alligator relentlessly kept after him. Now clinging to his leg again he pulled the elephant slowly towards the lake.

Inch by inch the elephant lost ground. At last he was dragged into the lake, trembling, his power almost spent. Half submerged in the water, exhausted, he still struggled spasmodically.

Finally, realizing that his end was drawing near the mighty elephant thought, "Who is this alligator of unwaning vigor? He must be Destiny personified, commissioned from above to bring about my destruction. But there is a sovereign power greater than he. By my own strength I cannot free myself. Now let me take refuge in Hari, the Savior of the poor and the afflicted. He is the protector of all creation. For fear of Him Death even flies away."

Having thus contemplated, the harassed leader of the herd concentrated his thoughts within his heart, and as he entered more and more within himself, his mind so long overclouded by illusion began to clear. He remembered his former birth; and before his mind flashed the words of a hymn he had learned when he was king Indra-dyumna. Then, with great devotion, mentally prostrating himself before the Lord, the greatest of elephants recited this hymn—a hymn that has become immortal:—

"Salutations to the revered One who endues all beings with consciousness, who is the soul of the universe, who is the basis of all things. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to the Self-Existing Lord of creation, the source, the support, the end of all that is; beyond cause and effect, the cause of all causes. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him whom the sages worship, whose praise the Rishis sing, to attain whom Yogis practise chastity and various penances. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him who is birthless and deathless, eternal, beyond name and form, who assumes forms to please His devotees. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him of unlimited power, of wonderful works, the Lord of emancipation, the giver of Nirvana. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"Salutations to Him who is far and near, who dwells in the lotus of the heart, who is beyond thought and speech, the Bliss of the blissful. To that Supreme Deity I bow down, again and again and again.

"May that Supreme Purusha compass my good. I do not pray for life in this elephant body. I crave that emancipation which time cannot affect. I pray for Self-knowledge which destroys the bondage of Maya. O greatest of Yogis, Lord Supreme, rescue me from the rounds of birth and death."

This prayer uttered with great devotion touched the heart of Hari. And the Lord summoned the devas and sent them to rescue the elephant. But the devas seeing the mortal struggle between the terrible brutes trembled in fear and dared not approach the spot. Then Hari who is the energy of all the devas, filled with compassion, himself assumed a celestial form. With a body shining like burnished gold, riding on an eagle of moonlike lustre, with flaming sword in hand, the Lord appeared in the heavens, and accompanied by a host of celestials came to the scene of combat.

And the elephant seeing the Lord approaching through the skies marvelled greatly. And lifting up his trunk holding a lotus, he spoke with difficulty, "O Lord, Savior of all creatures, I take refuge in Thee."

Then the Lord hastening to his rescue, quickly descended from the eagle and with a swift stroke of the sword cut off the head of the alligator.

Then, O ascetics, flowers began to shower from above, and devas and gandharvas and siddhas with song and music began to extol this mighty deed of Hari.

And he that was the alligator, once a great gandharva, freed from the curse that had brought on him this lowly birth, now appeared in a wonderful form. Cleansed of his sins he worshipped Hari, and with His blessings, ascended to the high region from which he had fallen.

And the elephant being touched by the Lord was transformed into a divine, ethereal form, and freed from the bondage of ignorance he attained the eternal abode of the blessed.

This, O ascetics, is the end of my story. He who contemplates this story with pious heart, and he who recites it with true devotion, with him the Lord is pleased, and on him He bestows his richest blessings.

THE RELATION BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND THE UPANISHADS

By Prof. A. K. Sharma.

I.

THE greatest want under which Buddhism has been suffering for a long time is perhaps the restoration of its spiritual background. Much has been written about the teaching of Buddha; an increasingly large amount of work has been done by way of translating original texts; the career of Buddhism has been accurately traced in all its vicissitudes; and even the conditions of life, economical, political, social and religious, which prevailed in Buddha's days, have been more or less ascertained. But the animating spirit, the fundamental principles, and the guiding ideas, which made Buddha give a particular form to his teaching, have yet precisely to be determined. Unless this is done it will not be possible to view Buddhism in correct perspective, much less to appreciate it properly.

It is in the absence of such an inquiry—owing to a deficiency in scholarship, if one may say so—that the world has come to possess a false notion of Buddhism. The illusion was created that Buddha's teaching was directed not only against Brahmanism but against the Upanishads also. One illusion begot many. That Buddha was atheistic or at least agnostic, that he denied the reality of soul, and that he characterized the supreme quest of life as a condition of utter annihilation, are only prominent examples of these. The result is that, at the present day, Buddhism is understood to be an odd mixture of high moral teachings and thorough going denial of the very basis of moral life. How these illusions arose is not in question here.

Unfortunately Buddhists themselves are blamable in large measure for this state of affairs. And our gratitude to Dr. Rhys Davids for all the good things that he has done in the cause of Buddhism, should not forbid us to point out, with regret, that he, more than any one else, is responsible for the spread of these illusions in English-speaking lands. If Buddha were to visit the earth to-day and talk with his followers on the various aspects of their beliefs or read the books written by eminent orientalists, he would be shocked to learn that views are attributed to him which he never held, and consequently he would have no hesitation in disowning and repudiating them altogether.

That Buddha was anti-Brahmanical in spirit admits of no doubt. In no measured terms he condemned the sacrifices, the meaningless rites, the extravagant ceremonials, the *hocus pocus* of magic, and the

and the vulgar superstition associated with the religion of the Vedas. But so also did the Upanishads! As a matter of historical fact Buddha fully entered into the spirit of the Upanishads in his attitude towards the popular religion.

Whether this sympathy between the two was confined to the negative attitude of condemning a third, or whether it was wider in scope, is a problem which does not seem to have been raised seriously in the history of Buddhist thought. The doctors of earlier days, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Asanga who were more in touch with the sources than we can ever aspire to be, understood and interpreted Buddhism in terms of the ideas developed in the Upanishads. But time and human perversity did their worst. The old doctors were forgotten, and a false view of Buddhism was allowed to creep in. In modern times it was only recently that attention was called to this question. Mr. Edmund Holmes pointed out "that Buddhism had been deeply influenced by the ideas of the ancient seers can scarcely be doubted." More recently still, Prof. Radhakrishnan adopted this view: "Buddha did not look upon himself as an innovator, but only as the restorer of the ancient way, i.e., the way of the Upanishads." The professor would appear to hold that "the only metaphysics that can justify Buddha's ethical discipline is the metaphysics underlying the Upanishads." Buddha carried out the teaching of the latter only partially; for "the central defect of Buddha's teaching is that in his ethical earnestness he took up and magnified one half of the truth and made it look as if it were the whole."

Mr. Holmes' view is wider; to him Buddhism is as complete an expression of the Upanishads as the limitations of practical life would allow. Thus it is held that the relation between Buddhism and the Upanishads is that of one-sided dependence, viz., of the former on the latter.

But when all the facts are envisaged the relation would seem to be one of mutual dependence. Chronologically, the Upanishads were anterior to Buddhism. This should not mean that the former in no wise depend upon the latter. When considered from the point of view of development, the two seem to be organically connected. The theoretical basis of Buddha's scheme of life is the teaching contained in the Upanishads; and separated from the latter the former would appear like a Jack in the box in the history of thought, in flagrant violation of the law of continuity. Conversely, for the practical application of the Upanishads we have to turn to Buddha's teaching. * * * *

This view is not as innocent as it might at first sight appear. It has serious implications, and it is well that they should be brought

out explicitly. Scholars are in the habit of contrasting the metaphysics of the Upanishads with the ethics of Buddhism. This is, to say the least, an absurd convention. Certainly the Upanishads contain a metaphysics; but as certainly they have also an ethics. The disciplines which the older as well as the later Upanishads advocate are, if anything, moral. The supreme end of life in the view of the Upanishads is not merely noetic in character; it is, to be sure, a spiritual condition; and to attain it the will is also pressed and transmuted into service. Now look at Buddhism. It is admittedly ethical; but—pace scholars—it is also metaphysical in that it has a definite and coherent view of reality and of phenomenon. The morality which it teaches is only a preparatory discipline in the sense in which it is understood in the Upanishads. And the goal presented by Buddha is not the realisation of the moral ideal in a narrow sense, but the attainment of a perfect spiritual state—the same as in the Upanishads—for which knowledge is also used, transcended, and sublimated. Thus each is metaphysical and ethical at the same time; and, as we shall show, they share the same pre-suppositions, present the same goal, adopt the same methods, and use the same ideas for scaffolding purposes.

How then shall we distinguish the one from the other? The Upanishads have three distinct marks. First, they move on the plane of theory, loftily indifferent to the facts of life; secondly, they contain profound thoughts which are conveyed in highly technical and learned language; thirdly, though in Buddha's days they were just reluctantly emerging from the seclusion of hermitages, they still retained their original esoteric character and were still protected, as it were, from the vulgar gaze of common men. Buddha took hold of their teaching, gave it a distinctly practical turn, brought it into touch with the work-a-day world, translated it into the language of daily life, and thus made it available even for the man in the street. In this attempt it was necessary to make some adjustments and even certain modifications—not, indeed, in fundamental principles, but in matters of details. In this way what was taught in the Upanishads as a theory of life was converted by Buddha into a regular programme.

II.

One pre-supposition which is generally considered to be common to both is the doctrine of transmigration. Strictly speaking, this is not a pre-supposition at all, for it is not organic to the teachings of themselves. It was taken as the starting point merely because it served the purpose of summing up the popular beliefs of the day and of stating the problem in clear terms,

The doctrine as understood in the days of the Upanishads was derived from two primary beliefs, *viz.*, the reality of self and the theory of Karma. The average Hindu, like the average man anywhere, took it for granted that, behind all the manifestations of individual life, there is an entity, a mysterious being called the self, and that it is the substratum of all the qualities and the source of all the deeds. Side by side with this, another interesting belief was developed. It is a matter of daily experience that nothing happens without bringing about something else, and that anything happens because of something else which happened before. This rule, if it be so, was applied to the moral life; and hence resulted the theory of Karma, *i.e.*, the law of causation in the moral sphere. As you sow, so shall you reap, and what you reap is what you sowed. This looks simple enough.

But there is a difficulty. There are facts which cannot be easily fitted into the theory. Variations in congenital tendencies and abilities, inexplicable privations like the one which puzzled Nicodemus, the undeserved happiness of the vicious in contrast with the misery of the virtuous: these are baffling mysteries of life. If anything could account for them, it must lie somewhere beyond the realm of experience. In the manner of the philosopher Kant who posited immortality on the grounds of ethical necessity, the Hindu of ancient days deduced not only future existence but also pre-existence on the same grounds. The theory of Karma was elaborated in such a manner as to include complicated processes of transcendental psychology. The distinctions of birth and death were swept aside at one bold stroke and reduced to stages in one continuous process of the life of the soul. It would appear that every deed leaves on the self a permanent effect which is bound to manifest itself in due time, and that, at the expiration of visible life, the self takes its accumulated burden with it, like a snail carrying its house on its back, to be born again on the earth in order to reap the fruits of its own deeds. Transmigration is a self-propelled circular activity: birth, deeds, death; birth, deeds, death, and so on. The soul is caught in it and it gets nowhere.

This was the form in which the doctrine was held even in Buddha's days. Buddha eliminated the idea of self, and described trans-migrations in terms of character: there are deeds and no doer. In this he made no departure from the teaching of the Upanishads; for even in the latter human individuality was condemned as an illusion. In the statement of popular beliefs it was allowed to stand where it was, only in the confidence that all empirical forms, including self, could be

transcended together in one act by the inculcation of correct knowledge. Moreover, the circumstances under which the Upanishads were taught permitted the teacher to explain, and the disciple to understand, the precise sense in which the term soul was used in various contexts. Buddha had a difficulty in this respect. He had to deal with the men of the world ; and they had no sort of philosophic discipline. To introduce, in talking with them, a term of protean meanings would be only adding to the confusion. He perceived also that there was also an advantage in his way of presenting the matter. The average man would understand much more clearly what is to reform his character than what is to transcend empirical individuality. The problem was thus made simpler and reduced to manageable dimensions.

III.

The second pre-supposition is the belief in the expulsive power of knowledge. The ancient sages as well as Buddha took for granted that worldly life, with its implied egoism, selfishness, and misery, is rooted in Avidya, and that Vidya is capable of bringing about a spiritual transformation. By Avidya the Upanishads meant, not indeed intellectual privation, but positive knowledge of empirical forms. Correspondingly Vidya was defined as intellectual intuition, as direct perception of reality. The intellectual gives a twisted view of things so that the more intellectual we become the farther away we are from reality. Hence scientific knowledge is worse than even ignorance. Real knowledge is acquired neither through instruction, nor through erudition, but only through an act of sympathetic insight.

Buddha did not think it necessary to give a systematic exposition of the nature of knowledge. He did not look upon himself as a philosopher who should propound doctrines, eluce conclusions, and offer proofs, but as a reformer whose mission lay in the application of the old teaching to the facts of daily life. Nevertheless, he exhorted his disciples to free themselves from ignorance and cultivate knowledge. "Buddhists are introduced into the realm of truth by faith, they possess truth only by sight." On occasions when he lapsed into philosophical mood, Buddha made himself very explicit. It was in such a mood that he once told the Bhikkus that, while ignorance of the four noble truths and of the three characteristics of the Unmanifest would confine them to the path of transmigration, knowledge of these would effect a sure release.

In the Upanishads actual imparting of the higher knowledge was deferred to the very end of a long period of discipleship ; while in the case of Buddha's teaching it was not so. The ancient sages were in a

privileged position. Pupils sought them, resided with them, and it was only after being gradually prepared that they were taught the secret lore. Buddha had neither a hermitage nor a school. None sought him at first; instead, he went out, like Jesus, in search of lost sheep. It was not possible for him to put men through a course of discipline before imparting knowledge. Even if it were possible, laymen could not have patience enough to undergo a preliminary training in order to gain something of which they could have no idea. Naturally they would ask what it was all about. So Buddha told them what it was about, and then suggested how they should cultivate it, establish themselves in it, and make it their own. This explains the fact that in the Upanishads knowledge is the ruling theme, while in Buddhism it looks like a means.

In this context we have to raise a very interesting problem. The Upanishads taught that all notions are illusions, and that knowledge is concerned with reality as such. Buddha accepted these propositions, but instead of adopting them as they were, he gave them a particular character. Throughout his teaching egoism is described as illusion and it is insistently contrasted with reality. We may be allowed to remark parenthetically that the original word for reality has been mis-translated by many as truth. The opposite of illusion is not that but reality. Be it as it may. Why did Buddha mark out the self for special treatment as if it were the only illusion? In asking this question we are perhaps asking for the very secret of Buddha's teaching. General propositions were propounded in the Upanishads in an admirable way. But Buddha wanted to work them out in life. The only way in which he could go about this was to concentrate attention on the self. Among illusions, egoism occupies a peculiar position. In the first place, it is a term in every illusion, the subject, as it were, of all of them. Destroy it, and they lose all significance. In the second place, the self is the breeding place of every kind of illusion, and there is a great advantage in applying a caustic remedy to the very source of infection. In this manner Buddha adjusted the knowledge which he learnt from the Upanishads to the needs of a programme of life.

IV.

It was in the presentation of the supreme end of life as Nirvana that Buddha was most conscious of his heritage. Nirvana is a spiritual entrance into Reality which comprehends all and which is comprehended by none. The difficulty in grasping its import was foreseen by Buddha himself. While he was resting under the shepherd's *Nyagrodha* tree on the bank of the Nairanjana, as depicted in the Arcadian scene

in the story of third temptation, he was taking stock of the situation and working out his plans for the future. Then the fear crept into him that his mission might end in failure ; for the worldling might not grasp the meaning of Nirvana, but might, on the other hand, mistake the joy of selflessness for abject surrender, and eternal life for annihilation. This fear has been fully justified by history. Nothing which Buddha taught has been so fruitful of controversies as the idea of Nirvana. Diverse interpretations have been put upon it ; and Prof. Poussin has done a service in classifying them under three heads, *viz.*, annihilation, immortality, and "unqualified deliverance". The last is his own view, and the other two belong to Rhys Davids, Childers, Pischol and the rest, whom he has criticised.

It is neither possible nor necessary in this paper to give an exposition of these views or even to appraise their values. It may, however, be pointed out that their authors have allowed themselves to be carried away by certain undetected assumptions. They seem to have assumed that a reference to conditions after physical death is essential for the full explanation of Nirvana, and therefore they have shifted the venue of enquiry from this life to the other. They seem to have assumed further that there should be continuity of empirical self even after Nirvana has been attained ; and this has made them anxious to find out the how and the where of this post-Nirvanic individuality. If it is not there, Nirvana is annihilation ; if it is there it is immortality ; if it is there, and if nothing positive can be predicated of it, it is "unqualified deliverance". Neither assumption has any foundation in the teaching of Buddha. In the first place, Nirvana is a spiritual state ; to the life of the spirit as such the presence or absence of a body is not a vital matter. It is not a far off goal lying beyond the gates of death but a level of life which is attained here and now. Did not Buddha himself declare explicitly in his sermon at Benares, that he had attained Nirvana even as he was ? In the second place, it is enough to observe that any casual student of Buddhism can see for himself that the reality of self, either here or hereafter, is repudiated, in spirit and in letter, in every page of the scriptures.

In one sense, Nirvana is extinction ; but what is extinguished is not the fundamental reality of life. "Whenever Buddha denies existence to the Ego, what he is really doing is to deny reality to the individual Ego, to the ordinary surface self." This is not a surmise. Whenever General Simha asked in the most straightforward manner if it was true that he was preaching the annihilation of the soul and the extinction of life's very essence, the master gave the plainest answer that he was preaching the annihilation of egoism and all the evils which issue there from, but not the annihilation of love, truth and charity. Again in the course of a sermon he told the Jatilas that a disciple of his should free himself from selfishness and thus attain Nirvana.

Self is the attempt to split reality into incompatible forms. The values it creates in order to consolidate and perpetuate itself, are in-participable and competitive. So long as they are allowed to remain life is a war of each against all. Destruction then is of negative values, particularly of selfishness which is the home of all negative values. In other words, the old Adam has to die in order that the new may live.

In another and real sense Nirvana is preservation of life. In his discussion with Simha, to which reference was made earlier, Buddha

gave the assurance that his teaching was intended to preserve the soul and not to destroy it. On another occasion he told the Brahman Kutadanta that his mission was to teach life and not death. Self is the epidermis of life ; scratch it, and you find eternal values within the derm. The pursuit of truth, disinterested service, benevolent affections, the holiness of disposition, love, charity, wisdom, righteousness: these abide for ever. In addition to the conservation of values, Nirvana brings with it, Abhinna and Idhi--Supernatural wisdom and power. The former would appear to be a kind of omniscience, and the latter a kind of omnipotence. When life takes these forms it attains a measure of divinity, and reaches the last degree of spirituality. It then moves on the plane of the eternal. According to the law of evolution taught by Buddha, change and formation are illusory notions created by Avidya. When these are removed, life soars to the highest altitude possible, transcending all limits and distinctions. "There is O Monks, a state where there is neither earth nor water, nor heat, nor air ; neither infinity of space, nor infinity of consciousness, nor, nothingness, nor perception, nor non-perception ; neither this world nor that world ; neither sun nor moon. It is the Uncreate. That, O Monks, I term neither coming nor going, nor standing ; neither death, nor birth. It is without stability, without change, it is the Eternal which never originates and never passes away. There is the end of sorrow." This was Buddha's way of expressing that Nirvanic life is at-one-ment with ultimate Reality, whatever be its name--Over-soul, Absolute, Brahman, God. It is the sublimation of human life into the Divine. It is metalogical ; there is neither feeling nor emotion in it. Though as is often done, it may be asymptotically described in terms of the highest spiritual values known to us, it still remains incomprehensible, baffling the categories of ordinary knowledge.—

--Extracted from "The Monist" Chicago, U. S. A.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The self or the spirit of man : by T. R. V. Sarma ; printed at the Electric Printing Works, Coimbatore. Price Rupee one.

This little book by T. R. V. Sarma places before the reader that the ideal of man should be the realization of the self. It is as it were a brief yet a lucid commentary upon the Maha Vakya, viz., "Tat Twam Asi" the English rendering of which is "Thou art that." The various aspects of this Maha Vakya are dilated upon at some length with special reference to the different stations in life : the book is divided into 7 chapters of which the chapter on "Renunciation in homo life" is very interesting and instructive, interspersed as it is with apt stories and illustrations. We recommend the book to all aspirants after Truth.

Why I should read the Gita : by B. K. Venkatachar B. A. L. L. B., Printed at K. N. Press, Mysore.

Mr. Venkatachari's treatise entitled 'Why I should read the Gita' is a fervent appeal on the part of the author to his country-men to promote the study of the Gita among them. The author gives in the earlier part of the book an elaborate appreciation of the Gita and dis-

cusses in detail the benefits that the nation as well as the individual may derive by a close and reverent study of the same. In the last portions of the book the author suggests, as a practical step for popularising the Gita, the formation of an All-India Organisation to collect funds for freely distributing copies of the Gita and for celebrating the Gita-day. The book is from the beginning to the end full of love and reverence for this sacred book of Hinduism. We hope the happy suggestions of the author, embodied in this volume, will meet with a ready response from every lover of Truth.

Shri Ramakrishna : by T. L. Vaswani ; published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Price as. 8.

This little book by T. L. Vaswani is a collection of some of his lectures and talks on Sri Ramakrishna and his message. Containing, as it does, a short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life and an appreciation and estimate of his greatness, the book will certainly be a valuable introduction to a study of Sri Ramakrishna. It is also to be remarked that the get-up is very neat and handy.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A NEW CENTRE OF THE R.K. MISSION AT SINGAPORE

A Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has been opened at Singapore in July last. In 1913 and 1919 Swami Sharvananda, then President of the Mission Centre at Madras, was invited by the local Hindus. The Swami's visits were so inspiring and impressive that during his second visit in 1919 the members of Arya Sangham a local society working on similar lines as the Mission resolved to hand over to the Mission all its properties, so that a centre of the Mission could be opened. The authorities of the Mission accepted the gift and expressed that a branch centre would be gradually opened at Singapore. Since Swami Sharvananda's visit in 1919, Swamis Abhedananda, Paramananda and others of the Mission passed through this beautiful metropolis of the Eastern Seas and lectured on the ideas and ideals of the Mission. In May last, Swami Adyananda was instructed by the Governing Body of the Mission to open the branch centre and take charge of it. Accordingly Swami Adyananda came down to Singapore from Kuala Lumpur and opened the centre. Several lectures have since then been delivered by Swami Adyananda on the ideas and ideals of the Mission. The subjects of Swami's lecture were: (1) Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission, (2) Heart of Hinduism, (3) The plan and purposes of human evolution, (4) The philosophy of Good and Evil, (5) The message of Bhagavat Gita, (6) What is Vedanta.

The Swami is at present conducting an Evening Service on every Sunday at the Mission House when the following programme is followed: (1) Invocation and Chanting. (2) Music, (3) Preaching through lectures and discourses, or Study Classes on Bhagavat Gita or Upanishad. The attendance to all these lectures and classes has been large. An Advisory Committee to assist the Swami has also been formed. The leading Hindus have agreed to serve there. The Mission has already obtained a plot of land from the late Arya Sangham and appeals will soon be made to collect funds to put up the Mission House. The other lines of activities will also be opened gradually.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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PRAYER



नो वेद त्वाग्नीम साधामि वेदे
नो वा विष्णुर्नो विश्वतामिलस्य ।
नो योगीन्द्रो मुख्याश्च देवा
भक्तो देव त्वगतत्वां प्रपद्ये ॥
नो ते गोत्रं नापि जन्मापि नाम्ना
नो वा रूपं नेत्रं शीलं न देशः ।
इत्यम्भुतोऽपीश्वरस्त्वं त्रिलोक्याः
सर्वान् कामान् पूरयेस्तद्भजेन्नाम ॥

Oh Lord, the Vedas do not have any knowledge direct of Thee, nor the Preserver of the universe, nor the Creator, nor even the greatest of Yogins, nor the gods and their chief, but Thy devotee does ; therefore, my God, I do take refuge in Thee !

My Lord, Thou hast no lineage nor birth, nor name nor form, neither hast Thou any duty nor any claim : Thou art beyond all ; but Thou fulfillest the desires of all that live in the three worlds ; therefore, my God, do I take refuge in Thee !

SKANDAPURANAM

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Disciple : Well sir, is Sri Ramakrishna still living ?

Swami : Have you gone mad ? If he does not live, why should we then lead such a life giving up our hearth and home and all ? He *is*. Only pour out your whole heart in prayer unto him, and he will stand revealed in his own glory to you and remove all doubts and confusions that are troubling you constantly in mind.

D. : Maharaj, do you see him now ?

S. : Yes we do,—only when he is pleased to reveal himself unto us, then alone can we see him. And every one can see him through his grace. But alas ! whoever longs to see him, and how many have that yearning, and that attachment !

D. : Venerable sir, please do tell us something about the Master.

S. : His is a never-ending story, my boy ; and very little of it do we know ! Verily, you will know him only when he will be pleased to make you know him. Also bear in mind that without the concentration of the threefold power, bodily, mental and spiritual, no religious unfoldment is at all possible. God realisation is not so easy a task, my son !

D. : Maharaj, when I sit for meditation, I find my mind roaming about the whole universe, and it does think on no end of things. Now, how to stop this restlessness of the mind, sir ?

S. : In the beginning, of course, such things do always happen ; at the same time you too must relentlessly try to check the mad outward course of your mind. And you can succeed in it in the following manner : do never begin your meditation immediately after sitting on your Asha-nam (holy seat). By discrimination draw the mind first

back within from its external pursuits and lock it up there at the sacred feet of your Istam; then begin Japam and meditation. If you follow this course for some time, the mind will naturally cease to wander about.

The easiest way in this Kaliyoga (Iron age) is the path of Japam. By constantly performing Japam the mind can be made easily calm and steady, and finally it shall lose itself gradually in the Istam. The path of Yoga and the like are also paths to God, but very difficult to follow. Therefore I ask you to perform Japam profusely, and along with it also think on the Istam; for in doing so, you perform Japam and meditation both simultaneously. This double process brings forth success sooner.

Do always perform your Sadhana with unswerving steadfastness, and do not let a single day pass by without it. Whether you like or no, down sit on your Ashanam at the appointed time, every day. With such an unerring regularity, if you can carry on your practices for three years, I assure you that some sort of love and attachment will grow in you for God and you shall feel yourself nearer to Him. Then you will be prompted from within to call upon Him and Him alone; and by your thousand efforts you will not be able to direct your mind in any other direction. It is at this stage that the joy of Sadhana is felt by an aspirant in his heart.

Except with an intense love and attachment for God, it is very difficult for a beginner to perform Sadhana on the right line after retiring into solitude single and alone. For, such a course is always fraught with the possibility of serious consequences. Therefore, two of a similar type and temperament should live together; as, in that case mutual help and guidance may be rendered, should any crisis befall them at any time. But on the other hand, if the number is more than two, participation in gossip and fuss forms the chief object of the company. And nothing is more injurious to spiritual practice than such

indulgence in talks profane. By such talks the mind is not only made void of the higher propensities and nobler aspirations but also made to forget God, the highest ideal of human life.

While out solely for carrying on spiritual exercises, an aspirant must not beg his food from Chhatrams. For, these are maintained to a greater part with the money of Sraddha (funeral ceremony), advanced by worldly people with the purpose of serving the holy. Besides, hundred other desires also prompt the mind of the people before subscribing their share to these charitable food-supplying agencies. For all these reasons meal supplied by them is not pure. But to live on Madhukari (the holy begging of food like a bee from door to door) is very good; it is pure and uncontaminated by any foul desire.

At the time of Sadhana, you must also cut short the quantity of your food to an appreciable minimum. With a loaded stomach Japam and meditation is not at all possible; because in that case the greater part of your energy will be squandered away in digesting the food, and the mind will consequently remain perturbed. It is why moderation in habits, in food and recreation, etc., has been so strongly enjoined in the Srimad Bhagavat Gita. "Yoga is not for him", the Lord says, "who eats too much or too little—nor, O Arjuna, for him who sleeps too much or too little."

Again, if you really want any spiritual realisation you must settle down to a particular place and carry on your Sadhana uninterruptedly for a length of time. By wandering about, you shall never gain anything tangible or permanent. This I am telling you from the page of my own life. But I doubt if you are prepared to take the benefit of this experience.

In this sacred monastery of Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) how grand are the facilities for Sadhana! Food or clothes, nothing are you to think for. All is ready at

hand. Why don't you live here and apply yourself wholeheartedly to a life of constant prayer and meditation? But who would listen to us! There is no good in 'vagabondising' my child.

If you think that you can become a Mahatman or a great saint by roaming about here and there for some time, I tell you, you are misguided. You cannot become a saint in that way. Without unceasing practice you cannot have any religious experiences simply by means of trickery. If you sincerely cherish a longing for God-realisation you must plunge yourself in Sadhana and be completely lost in it and it alone. Without sincere Sadhana what good will come out of your wandering about from place to place, dressed in the sacred Garua and living on holy legging?

A PEEP INTO HINDU SOCIAL LIFE

Human Society, like every other functioning organism, is a living entity. Its expansion and progress depend entirely upon the health and vitality of the fundamental units that constitute its core and essence. The agitation that has been going on in this country to build up the edifice of political life has set on foot a corresponding enquiry into the problems of our social existence. Sociology and Politics are so interlinked with each other in India that the dearth of healthiness in one, inhibits in fact a progressive evolution of the other. It is an incontrovertible fact of history that our aspirations, social and political, have ever been shaped and crystallised into a definite ideal in the environs of our society. Indeed, it is in the dynamo of society that the energies of the whole nation are conserved and it is from there that they pour forth in a deluge upon the country to revitalise every limb of the national organism. Compared with other systems of the world, the Indian social life stands as a quite distinct phenomenon in respect of its ideal and culture. But as ill luck would have it, the huge machinery of Hindu society has, through encrustations of ages, been a little

out of gear : the social life has been honeycombed with corruption, and the progressive elements have failed to work an adequate change in the conservative outlook of social polity. Persons are not wanting who in their anxiety to spell a rapid transformation in our social environments have identified their perspective of life with that of the Occidental progressivists and gone so far as to declare, "As long as the Hindus cling to their civil and religious institutions, customs and habits, they must remain what they have always been, grovelling in poverty and wretchedness. Their institutions and customs are insurmountable obstacles in their path of progress. To make a new race of Hindus, you must begin by undermining the foundations of their civilisation, religion and polity and turn them into atheists and barbarians and then give them new laws, new religion and new polity!" This is the specimen of a remedy that is prescribed more often than not by the sociological experts hailing from lands whose social philosophy is diametrically opposite to that of ours not only in spirit and outlook but in every minute detail. Already a great mischief has been done to our organic life through a promulgation of this kind of specious philosophy by men who show a criminal 'fondness for smoking room stories' to eke out a mess of stale kale to satisfy the unthinking social beings. Mr. Ranade, the celebrated historian of Maharashtra, has indignantly spurned in his book any such conception of unholy alliance the outlandish idea of any foreign land; for we need no foreign ideal or masters for our social regeneration. "The work of liberation must be the work of our own hands, each one working of himself for his own release."

The reason why the Western outlook of social life is not on all fours with that of India is not far to seek. The process of evolution of the two distinct types of society is quite different and the ideas and principles that mould the two are as poles asunder. For, our society is based upon the eternal verities of life to meet the spiritual ends of human aspirations, and all our adjustments are based upon the different readings of the same ideal that ultimately governs the varied expressions of our social life. The whole fabric is, in short, grounded on the *terra firma* of religion. The Occidental society on the other hand has evolved in response to the physical demands of the different ages; and

the utilitarian principles that stand as the background of their material culture are *ipso facto* the central pivot round which the web of Western life has gathered. Thus the ideals and the drift of their evolution being different, the two types of social life naturally stand apart from each other and the remedy when needed to be administered for the treatment of the social malady cannot, as a matter of fact, be one and the same, and as such, the application of the probing knife of an Occidental or an Anglicised social surgeon would prove disastrous to the flickering life of our present diseased organism. One characteristic feature of our society has ever been its assimilative potency and capacity for adjustment without any detriment to its ideals and traditions. The Greeks and the Scythians, the Kushans and the Huns laboured in vain in the past to pull down the mighty edifice of Hindu society from the pinnacle of its glory; and even now in this age of gross materialism and catastrophic political changes, the light of ancient spiritual ideal burns undimmed in the temple-garden of our social life. In spite of the bloody onslaughts of multitudinous races, the Hindu society with all its cultural heritage still stands firm as an adamant to the wonder of humanity. The progress of our society, as such, must be measured not by the amount of material or physical comforts it can provide but by the spirit of sacrifice and spirituality it develops in individuals; for the provision of material happiness has always been a matter of tertiary interest in the scheme and conception of our social ideal. The only thing now needed is not the modification of the fundamental groundwork of our social existence under the stimulus of a foreign idealism, but a healthy expansion of our shrunken social outlook by means of an immediate removal of some accumulated filthy notions and nauseous habits which have blinded us to our pristine comprehensive social life. So every attempt of ours to effect any change in the existing order of things must be guided by our indigenous cultural instincts and heritage and not by the outlandish materialistic conceptions of Occidental life.

Every careful student of sociology must have observed that "Indian social life is a standing example of the result and consequences of the eternal subjection of the individual to society and forced self-sacrifice by dint of institution and hard discipline."

There has of late grown up a conflict between Individualism and Socialism. Socialism demands that an individual who is an integral part of the society should sacrifice individual freedom to social supremacy, whereas Individualism advocates the cause of individual freedom in every sphere of human activity. It is indeed time for us to take stock of the assets and liabilities of our society for a healthy readjustment. Social systems and civilisations resemble individuals in one respect: they are organic growths, apparently possessing definite laws of health and development. Such laws science has already defined for the individual but it is yet to be seen whether these are possible with regard to the growth of cosmic social order. To-day we stand at the very centre, as it were, of a mighty revolution of social philosophy; and the doctrines of Individualism as well as Socialism the ideology of which with an equalisation of rights and duties speaks with fascinating appeal, must be weighed in the balance of our ripe experience. A close scrutiny of the situation reveals that the evil effects of the hard discipline of our social life more than counterbalance its redeeming assets. It has reduced the average individual to a life-less automaton, there being left no scope for mental activity and unfoldment of the heart. Truly Swami Vivekananda says, "There is not even the least stir of inventive genius, no desire for novelty; and the radiant picture of the morning sun never charms the heart." In fact there is a dire dearth of enthusiasm. The iron discipline, however indispensable it might have been as a safeguard of social interests, has brought about a social tragedy in that the individuals have become so many non-intelligent machines as it were. Unless adequate latitude be guaranteed to individuals for self-expression and the insuperable barriers made elastic to answer the growing expansion of life, it would not be premature to anticipate that our society, the once great nursery of our culture and civilisation, would prove to be the very grave-yard of our nobler aspirations.

India has never been in want of social reforms who have flourished in response to the imperious needs of the different ages. In the Mahommedan period the liberal movements set on foot by Ramanuja, Ramananda, Kavir, Nanak and Chaitanya served as safety-valves of our social nature as it were. The modern age has

likewise witnessed a good crop of reformers whose humanising principles and liberal ideas have added a great momentum to the progressive realisation of the social ideal. But the problems of Hindu society are too numerous to be solved all at once. The society has outgrown many of the old institutions which were workable at a certain period of Indian history ; and some evils have, to our great fortune, received in recent years a decent burial as well. But such problems as the widow-marriage, the abolition of child-marriage and polygamy, sanitation, village-reconstruction and compulsory education for males and females, to mention only a few, are indeed some of the most burning topics of the day. And of all the questions, the problem of caste or Don't-touchism has of late been the subject of indignant criticism from the platform and the press. But before sounding the death-knell of the caste-barriers to usher in a uniformity in the apparently unsymmetrical and deformed structure of the social order, it would not be unjustifiable to point out that this caste-system in the social organisation is not merely an accident or an unnecessary appanage to it. It had its utility and has grown into modern rigidity as an expression of social or, more correctly, national demands. The origin of castes is as old as the growth of the demarcated lines of duties amongst the different sections of humanity in India. But what is a necessity in one age proves not unfrequently a deterrent in a subsequent age. The irony of the whole thing lies in the fact that the caste-privileges—once a healthy assignment—have in the modern times been gripped as the absolute monopoly by certain sections of the Hindu society with the result that the persons struggling at the lowest rung of the ladder have been used as their footstools and reduced to the level of dumb beasts of burden in the society ! The whole atmosphere now rings with the clamorous uproar of the oppressed and the outcasts. "The solution of this huge problem," as Swami Vivekananda once said, "lies not in bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher. The ideal at the one end is the Brahmana and the ideal at the other end is the Chandala and the whole work is to raise the Chandala up to the Brahmana."

"We are neither Vedantists, nor Puranics, nor Tantrics. We are just 'Don't-touchists.' Our religion is in the kitchen,"

said the patriot saint Swami Vivekananda. Verily, it is this spirit of Don't-touchism which is mainly responsible for the present social debacle. About one-fifth of our people have become Mahommedans not because they feared the sword or the fire but because they received Islam as a means to get rid of the grinding tyranny of the privileged classes. The Mahommedans were and still are to the Hindu social outcasts what Buddhism was to the priest-ridden masses of India in the days of Hindu independence. The success of Christianity in this land is indeed a living commentary upon the narrowness of views and the fossilisation of principles that characterise the present-day Hindu society. The Swamiji warned the people in one of his remarkable speeches in Madras: "One-half of your Madras people will become Christians if you do not take care. Was there a sillier thing before in the world than what I saw in Malabar country? The poor Pariah is not allowed to pass through the same street as the high-caste man, but if he changes his name to a hodge-podge English name, it is all right; or to a Mahommedan name, it is all right. Shame upon them that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed; their own children are allowed to die of starvation, but as soon as they take up some other religion they are well-fed. There ought to be no more fight between castes." The root of all these evils is to be traced to the rank illiteracy of the masses and the lack of active sympathy of the literate and the privileged classes. Tradition-bound the people of our country cling to their age-long customs and institutions with a leech-like tenacity, however outworn or pernicious these usages may grow with the march of time. No doubt, many of our social abuses are but a natural sequence of our political and economic breakdown; but the real causes are to be sought elsewhere. The noble idealism of our social life has been flouted and it does no longer inform our purposes and social activity with the very same broadness of outlook and largeness of views as it did in the past. It is the forgetfulness of the ancient spiritual idea that has spelt the present aberration of the Hindu society from its wonted orbit of growth and expansion. It is a physiological experience that no bacillus can emasculate any human organism until it is degenerated by vice, bad food, privation and exposure. The intellectual and spiritual stagnation of the modern Hindu

society is the result of a systematic crusade against the influx and incorporation of healthy changes that have come as an imperious necessity. It is therefore the patriotic duty of every right-thinking soul in India to properly diagnose the disease first and then administer the desired remedy for the restoration of its pristine healthy tone.

The Hindu Society has already drifted a good deal from its ancient moorings under the impart of Western culture and idealism. The spiritual ideal which is the very sheet-anchor of our social life has been lost sight of. The people through colossal ignorance have hugged to their bosom for their supposed safety and well-being all those customs and practices which have proved effete and outworn in the scheme of social evolution. There must be at this stage an organised attempt on the part of the high-souled patriots of the land to awaken the people to the magnitude of the catastrophe that awaits them. As already hinted education is the only solvent of this problem. But it does not necessarily presuppose that all men from top to bottom should pass through the grinding mill of educational institutions. The opinions of the masses can very well be educated through the instrumentality of demonstration-lectures on an organised basis without unnecessarily resorting to the stereotyped and unproductive academic training.

This is the step that involves a pre-requisite of trained batches of youngmen imbued with a spirit of heroic self-sacrifice. For, patriotism and self-sacrifice are identical, and the days of frothy sentimentalism and mealy-mouthed philanthropy have gone by. Every patriotic soul, if he is really patriotic, if his heart bleeds for the suffering millions of his country-men, must be prepared to undertake the responsible task of reform and re-construction in right earnest and it is with an attitude of love and sympathy that these trained practical idealists should approach and tackle the hydra-headed social evils that have paralysed the limbs of Hindu Society. A spirit of self-confidence and a belief in their infinite capacity for action must be roused in the feckless minds of this decaying race, and side by side a corresponding picture of the causes of their present helplessness and degeneration should also be distinctly outlined. Platform orators

have up till now scratched only at the surface of this profound subject; and the country has already grown sick of political fanfaronade. What the country now wants is the active enthusiasm of her youthful bands pledged to carry on village reconstruction on an extensive and organised scale; for the nation lives not in the stifling atmosphere of congested towns but in the villages where the bold peasantry, the backbone of the land, lie through ignorance wrapped up in superstitious fear. The reconstruction must be based on the most universal ideals of the Hindu nation. The remedy lies in the dissemination of the most democratic and unifying principles of the Vedanta which proclaiming the divine rights of humanity irrespective of caste, creed or colour, and teaching that all are children of God whether Brahmin, or Pariah will once more purify the social conditions and remove the evils that have crippled the spontaneous expression of our social activities. This full-chested sympathy for all,—for the privileged and the outcasts, for the Brahmin and the Pariah shall demolish the hitherto insurmountable walls of separation between the high and the low, and evoke the much-needed feeling of brotherhood and mutual well-being. Is it not an insult to the intelligence of humanity that man—the very incarnation of divinity—should be labelled down as the most wretched of all creatures in the eye of man? Is not divinity the common heritage of man—the very essence of his being? What a pity this lofty ideal of universal brotherhood based upon the recognition of the divinity of man has been knocked down to the dust in a land where Vasistha and Vyasa, Narada and Satyakama have ever received the unstinted homage of all humanity through shining centuries of her past and present. Let the vision of life be widened to see deep into the very core of being and recognise the ultimate principle that governs the collective life of humanity. Then and then alone the man-created distinctions that have ramified the cosmic existence into so many compartments of social life will melt down into one stream of human brotherhood and the land would be saved all the worries and wars of caste or class, sex or blood for all time to come. Needless to say, the time for the admission of the socially ostracised to the manifold privileges, social and political, has been long overdue; *for the equalisation of rights and duties is the very groundwork of*

political unity and an indispensable condition of a co-ordinated activity for the achievement of common good. The sacred task of social reform demands from every soul, a Himalayan patience, and, what more, the lofty idealism of service to the Lord through the service of humanity. So sings the great Indian Rishi :—

“ From the highest Brahman to the yonder worm,
And to the very minutest atom,
Everywhere is the same God, the All-love ;
Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet.
These are His manifold forms before thee,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God ?
Who loves all beings, without distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God.”

India has become a playground of various types of humanity, and patriotism has been a very cheap commodity in the market of modern politics. India does not want any more of sentimentalism. A high-souled genius whose heart beats with all the hearts that ache, known and unknown, who is not chained down to the superstitions of his obnoxious social environments but pitched far above the narrowness of depraved human nature, and whose vision is broad enough to have a comprehensive sympathetic outlook on our social life with all its cultural heritage is the imperious need of the hour. The nebulous opinions of the unthinking masses are yet to be consolidated, and the artificial barriers still stand to be broken down to ensure a smooth and healthy flow of a collective life. Swami Vivekananda with all the fervour of a patriotic soul calls out to his beloved countrymen, “ Let us not forget that God thou worshipping is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma ;—that the ideal of thy motherland is Sita, Savitri and Damayanti. Forget not—that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure,—are not for thy individual happiness ; forget not—that thou art born as a sacrifice to the mother-altar. Forget not—that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite universal motherhood, forget not—that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian,—and proudly

proclaim,—“I am an Indian,—every Indian is my brother.” Say,—“The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother.” Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice,—“The Indian is my brother,—the Indian is my life. India’s gods and goddesses are my God, India’s society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Baranasi of my old age.” Say, brother,—‘The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good.’” Thus and thus alone can the highest end of our cosmic social life be achieved and the nation revitalised and established on the majesty of its pristine glory and culture.

SEARCH AFTER TRUTH

By Swami Iswarananāla

“Salutations to Thee, Oh, Narayana. Thou the sweet Beloved of the Gopis, whose form is made of Conscienceness, Bliss Absolute, grant there should be no awareness of ‘I’. But if the feeling of ‘I’ is to remain then, Oh, Bestower of boons, let it be in the form of ‘I am the All’.” Thus sang the great poet-saint of Kerala, Thunchath Ezhuthachhan.

All the religions of the world have, with one voice, laid one rigorous injunction upon all mankind: “Give up this ‘I’; renounce; efface thyself”; This is the universal message of all prophets and sages.

For, if there is anything in this world which man does not like to lose it is his own self. He might give up his parents, relations, friends, home, property, country—everything he loves; but the one thing he cannot think of giving up is his own ‘I’. That is the one object of love in all cases of love. A mother only loves herself through her love of the child. When a wife loves the husband, she loves herself through him, when a man loves God then also he loves himself. This ‘I’ is thus seen to be everywhere the one object of affection, of worship, of devotion, of man’s homage. That is why you and I are afraid of death. No one wants to be destroyed, no one wants to be annihilated. That is why robbers rob and saints pray. And that is why they talk of individuality, for who would like to cease to be himself? The world is running after this ‘I’, robbing, fighting, cheating, quarrelling, praying,—all for this one ‘I’, the ego.

In the midst of this tremendous effort, day and night, to keep up this individuality, in the midst of this struggle for very existence, is

proclaimed a message—a confounding message: "Oh man, lose thyself, cease to be, and thou shalt live." That is the most terrible thing to be told to a man. It frightens him out of his wits. It makes him breathless. It drives him mad. That is the one thing against which all men, nay, all living beings, would rebel. And yet in no uncertain voice goes the firm command of religion, "Give up; renounce, and search after Truth."

That is declared to be the supreme goal of religion,—the effacement of the ego, the 'I.' A most unreasonable demand, to cease to be! Then what is the meaning of all this struggle? Man revolts against it with his whole soul and yet religion says 'It can't be helped for there is no other way.'—न प्रजया धनेन न च इज्यया त्यागेनैकेन अमृतत्वमानशु: "Not by wealth, not by progeny, but through renunciation alone is immortality attained."

The fear of losing oneself is a universal fear found in all creatures, small or great. In the small worm that crawls away from under your feet and in the Yogin who is about to lose himself in the unknown depths of the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* there is the same fear. This desire therefore to be what we are at this moment, this clinging to the life of individuality seems to be a quite reasonable aspiration. But does man ever pause and ask whether this 'I,' this ego which he fondles so much and wants to preserve at all costs, does really remain the same for two moments together? To-day I am a child, after some years I am a boy, then I am a youth, then an old man, then after death—I know not what.

Therefore religion says that you are not an individual as yet. You are but a mass of change. In spite of your dislike of losing your individuality you are losing it every minute. 'What will remain then if this individuality is gone' is the most pertinent question that crops up the very next moment. The answer is,—you remain yourself, your REAL SELF. What you lose is your false self. And you must lose your false 'I' if you want to gain your real 'I.' For, "He who loseth himself, findeth himself." And that is the task to which religion addresses itself.

A careful analysis of the above position will reveal to us the truth that in the midst of so many changing egos, there is one unchanging "I",—the Real Self totally distinct from the false one that is subject to change. The real 'I' is neither old nor young, neither rich nor poor, learned or ignorant, healthy or unhealthy, happy or miserable. This real 'I' therefore is unchanging. And that which does not change can never die and it cannot be born; hence this 'I' is the 'Ancient One'. He who gives up his lower ego does not cease to exist but he lives for ever

may, he alone is immortal. Therefore that which changes is something else. The appendages and attributes come one after another and stand before the light of the Self, get themselves illuminated for a time and vanish, their place being taken by others. As it has no form, it is not limited in space, it is all-pervading. And as two things do not occupy the same place at the same time, Self is therefore all that exists—the One without a second. The Self is the witness of all egos. It is therefore the sentient and self-effulgent One, the Chit. As darkness cannot stand before light, so no ignorance, no misery, no bondage can stand before the scorching fire of this self-effulgent Infinite Existence.

Through our enquiry whether there is a real unchanging 'I', we have already traversed one method of religion known to the Vedantins as the path of Discrimination or *Vicharamarga*. This way of union with the Supreme Self or Paramatman is also known as Jnana Yoga. The Jnanin having made this discovery holds on to this truth by sheer power of his will, through happiness or misery, life or death, uttering with every breath, 'I am He, I am He,' until at last even the last and the subtlest mentation of 'I' vanishes. This is the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* where all is hushed into an unspeakable, nameless Silence where there is no man, or world, or God; no 'I' nor 'thou', but the One without a second,—Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—*Akhanda Satchidananda*.

But the elimination of the ego by this method is not so easy as it may appear at first sight. The ego is like the peepul tree, the branches of which you may chop off to-day, but sprout to-morrow. You may reason as much as you like but something of it will still remain. Mere power of reason and intellectual analysis though they may go a great way in this method will not suffice. What is wanted is a clarity of vision, an unobstructed and uninterrupted perception of the Self which is discovered by reason and analysis, and this uninterrupted vision of the transcendental Self is not to be gained without purity of mind or *Chitta Suddhi*. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Mere intellectual exercise will not gain a permanent victory; the ego will crop up again and again and the vision of the Self will slip off, unless fortified by purity of mind. "When the mind becomes pure, perception becomes uninterrupted and constant."—
सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवास्मृतिः ।

The Bhakta has a different way of getting rid of his ego. He does not pause too much to analyse the nature of the 'I'. Intellectual exercise has little charm for him. He is a man of emotion, he wants to love and to be loved. He knows and feels there is a God and that

He alone is the fittest and highest object of his love. His method is therefore to sublimate his 'I' by relating it to God. He, the Lord is the only relation he knows :—

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव ।

त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ॥

त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव ।

त्वमेव सर्वं मम देव देव ॥

"Thou art my father ; Thou art my mother ; Thou art my kith and kin ; Thou art my friend and companion ; Thou art my knowledge and learning ; Thou art my wealth ; Thou, O God of gods, art my all in all." That is what the Bhakta says. And when this relation with God is established a corresponding change takes place in the ego : for when through the bond of love this relationship attains its consummation, the Bhakta attains the state of *Tadiyata* or 'Thyness'. In that state he with all that he possesses belongs to his Beloved. His 'I' is henceforward an instrument in the hands of the Lord. It has dipped itself in the ocean of Satchidananda and has assumed the colour of divinity. Such a soul feels an indescribable bliss in the enjoyment of the Beloved. Unlike the Jnanin he retains a very thin, purified, transparent ego just for the enjoyment of the bliss of Divine Love. In the words of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna the true Bhakta does not want to become one with *sugar* like the Jnanin but wants to taste the sweetness of the sugar. But there are others again who attain a complete union with the Beloved as water mingles with water when the least trace of ego is swept away by a flood of passionate yearning for union with Him.

The Raja Yogin's method of dealing with this ego is different from those dealt with. According to his philosophy the whole of created universe is an ocean of Chitta and what is called creation is nothing but the breaking up of this ocean into waves or *Vrittis*. The sun and the moon, the stars and the earth are all waves in this ocean. So are plants, animals, and men. Every *Jiva* or living being with its 'I' is the centre of such a whirlpool and the solution of the problem of 'I' is the elimination of it by stopping this *Vritti*. Human mind is the store-house of hundreds of thoughts and emotions and all these are nothing but waves. The waves of happiness, misery, joy, sorrow, etc., exist because of this ego and it is only by stopping this main wave that all other *Vrittis* can be destroyed and the problem of life be solved. And according to him therefore *Yoga* is *Chitta Vritti Nirodha* or the suppression of all the waves in the Chitta. For this purpose he throws his mind into a single wave by concentrating it on one idea alone, and thus letting all others subside of their own accord ; and when all

others have subsided this wave also subsides just as no one wave alone can stand by itself on the surface of a lake. In this way the Aham Vritti or ego-wave absorbs completely and the result is Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The whole universe of creation, the whole of nature whether matter or energy, body, senses, or mind is now blotted out. He the Witness alone remains, the One without a second,—the self-effulgent One. This is *Kaivalyam* or *Mukti*, complete liberation from all bonds.

There is yet again another method of approach,—and that is the Karma Yogin's. He does not like to go on analysing, or reasoning on this ego. To him it is like sitting in a corner and peeling onion day and night. He is active by his nature and he feels choked if he has no active work to do. The only way by which he can give relief to his surging energy is active work. Inactivity would mean starvation and death. So he is driven to work at first all for this 'I'. Soon he gets blows from nature. Now and then he may get a little happiness, but very soon he finds out that misery is as much his lot as happiness. He loses all peace of mind and is completely upset. Yet he has to work; for giving up work does not bring the solution of the problem nearer. This time he works without attachment to the results. He cannot work for himself; for that brings misery and bondage. So henceforth his work is only for others, the family or community or country or for all mankind. Henceforward he does not exist for himself: he has become a citizen of the world and he renounces all the fruits of his work. The ego is thus effaced altogether and his sole object is now the service of humanity: for he feels that he exists only for that and not a moment for himself. Generally he begins to perceive the unity behind all the workings of nature. He realises that there is only one power which controls the whole of nature, and that that power is conscious. He calls it God and says that it is the Divine will that is working in this centre. Thus is the ego of the Karma Yogin completely annihilated and the state to which he attains is called *Naishkarmya Siddhi*, the state of worklessness, for there is no worker or work from the subjective standpoint; there is only a witness which does not take part in any of the activities of body or mind. The Karma Yogin now sees activity in inactivity and inactivity in activity and thus in the midst of intense work he attains the *parama santi* or supreme peace that passeth all understanding. Such a one works, because no work can bind him; while the ordinary self-ridden or selfish man works, because he is driven to work by desires for his 'I'.

Thus these four Yogas have each their own characteristic methods of dealing with the ego, though the final goal is the same, namely, the annihilation of the false, changing, little "I" and union with the real

unchanging, Infinite Self. No one method may suit all temperaments; each one will have to find his own path by experimenting for himself; or by learning it from a Guru. At the same time it will be seen that not only the goal is the same, but the principle of each method is involved more or less in all the others. Thus from the standpoint of the Raja Yogin, the Jnanin, the Bhakta, and the Karmin are all suppressing in their own way the *aham vritti*. The Jnanin sees that the Bhakta is giving up one "I" for another. The Bhakta sees in the method of the Jnanin an eager search by the lower ego to find the higher Self. In the Raja Yogin this love takes the form of the desire of the wave 'I' to lose itself in the bosom of the infinite ocean of God by concentrating all the waves on one wave which ultimately subsides by union with the ocean. In the Karma Yogin the Bhakta sees the soul's attempt to be like the *Iswara* who though ever and anon creating, preserving, and destroying this universe remains nevertheless a non-doer and a witness. He is thereby unknowingly trying for a union with his real divine nature and this is a form of Bhakti. The Karmin sees in one and all ceaseless struggle and renunciation of all the fruits of it, to remain unaffected as a mere witness.

In fact, the principle of each of these methods will be found practically involved in the others, not only in this respect, but in various other matters as well. But in the actual practice of the methods the starting points are so dissimilar that the beginner gets confounded and distracted if he were to attempt all the four Yogas simultaneously. The four Yogas may be compared to the four opposite radii of a circle, all converging to the same centre of Supreme Reality, but each at the starting point is so far away that one does not see where the other leads to. The *sadhaka* becomes more and more aware of the common goal and the common principles applied in all, the more he approaches the centre along the line of his own advance. But even then to combine all these in practice into a harmonious whole is one of the most difficult tasks for a *sadhaka*, though there is unlimited power lodged in each and every soul for development on all sides. Hence very rare are the souls in this world who have harmoniously combined Bhakti, Jnana, Karma, and Yoga into a balanced character. A few souls like Bhagavan Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have in this age demonstrated the possibility of such a harmonious development of character which is as deep as the ocean and as broad as the sky. To go in for all these Yogas at the same time may ensure all round progress, but the progress may be slow. Hence the general injunction to take up one of these Yogas *only* as one's main path and to practise the others as subsidiary.

But the greatest obstacle in all these Yogas is the fear of losing the individual 'I' tied down to this world by various chords of desires and attachment. The classical incident of Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda) crying out in bewilderment, "Oh, what have you done! I have father and mother at home," when he was raised to Samadhi state by a touch of Sri Ramakrishna is an instance in point and such a daring soul as Swami Vivekananda, what to speak of ordinary mortals!

So long as we are bound to this world by desires, selfish or altruistic, this hesitation and fear to lose ourselves are sure to linger. The only remedy known to the saints and sages is the sword of *Vai-raggyam*. The soul that aspires to soar unfettered into the bosom of the Infinite must be prepared to boldly snap all bondages, selfish or unselfish, for वैराग्यमेव अभयम्—"Dispassion alone makes for fearlessness."

When complete annihilation of the ego happens in *Jadasamadhi* then it never returns to this plane of mortals. In the case of those souls who come down to this plane the ego once more emerges from the bosom of the Infinite. What is then the nature of the ego that thus comes down from Samadhi? To quote Sri Ramakrishna: "Some who may have got on to the highest or the seventh plane and have thus become lost in God-consciousness are pleased to come down from that spiritual height with a view to the good of mankind. They keep the ego of knowledge, or in the other words, the Higher Self. But this ego is a mere appearance. It is like a line drawn across a sheet of water. Hanuman was blessed with the vision of God both with form and without form, but he retained the ego of a servant of God. Narada and others attained the highest knowledge. But still they continued like the murmuring waters of the rivulet to talk and to sing. This shows that they too kept this ego of knowledge. They were Bhaktas and Jnanins: they talked and sang about the Lord with a view to the good of others." "Suppose a person digs a well. He is thirsty and drinks the water of the well. It is not unusual for such a person to keep with him the digging implements for the sake of others who may want them for the same object. In the same way a Teacher of this class who may have drunk the waters of Everlasting Life and may have thus quenched his spiritual thirst and come to the perfection of Brahma Jnana is often anxious to do good to mankind. With this view he retains the ego of Knowledge, the ego of Bhakti, the ego of Perception." "It is a case of Involution and Evolution. You go backwards to the Supreme Being and your personality becomes lost in this personality. This is Samadhi. You then retrace your steps. You get back your ego and come back to the point whence you started only to

see that the world and your ego or self were involved in the same Supreme Being, and God, man, and nature are mere identities, so that if you hold to one of them, you realise the others."

The question is asked as to which is the higher realization,—the losing of the ego in Samadhi or retaining it after Samadhi. The fact is that so long as there is the sense of the Absolute there is the Relative as well and vice versa. The Whole is *implied* in each aspect but not *expressed* and the retention of the ego after realizing the Absolute makes the *expression* of the Whole complete. Therefore that realization is to be considered perfect in which the Absolute and the Relative, the unmanifest and the manifest, are realised simultaneously in the same centre as one Whole. "Such an ego kept after Samadhi," said Sri Ramakrishna, "solves the problem of life."

LIFE-SKETCH OF TUKARAM

By Swami Gunatitananda

India is a land of saints and sages. Every period of her historic career scintillates with a splendid hierarchy of shining spiritual figures whose teachings and activities have become the permanent legacy to mankind. It is indeed regrettable that most of the lives of these saints, especially of those of Southern India still remain shrouded in obscurity. Among the most famous saints of Maharashtra, such as Jnanadeva, Namadeva, Ekanath, Ramadas and Tukaram, the name of the last-mentioned saint, Tukaram is most popular, though a faithful life-sketch of the sage has not yet been presented in details to the public. Born of Shudra parents, he by his qualities of heart alone,—by his selfless devotion to God, became the pride of Maharashtra. Tukaram was the second son of Bolhoba whose eldest son was Sawaji and the youngest Kanhoba. His family was famous for its righteousness and honesty and all the more for its devotion to God. As the relation between the law of heredity and the law of Karma is only a fulfilment, Tukaram is not an exception to the peculiarity which can be marked in every saint, some of his ancestors being renowned devotees. Tukaram's eighth ancestor, Vishwambhar Buva by name was a great devotee of Vithoba. As a result of his devotion he saw a dream in which God Vithoba told him, "You will find two images near by your house—one of mine and one of Rakhumai. Go on worshipping them, having installed them in your house, instead of going to Pandarpur every year." Accordingly he obeyed and his descendants followed in his footsteps till as a result of their accumulated devotion, their family was blessed by the birth of Tukaram.

Every one is aware that during the centuries when Maharashtra was struggling under the oppression of foreign domination, it maintained the uninterrupted tenor of its religious life through the unremitting attempts of a galaxy of saints and religious leaders that flourished in the land from time to time. The lives of these illustrious saints of Southern India who preceded the advent of Tukaram are of great historical interest in the growth of the Maharashtra-life. Jnaneshwar the founder of Bhagavat Dharma in the Maharashtra and his contemporary saint Namadeva, gave the best in them for the religious awakening of the country; it was the noble and all comprehensive teachings of these two that gave a new lease of life to Maharashtra inspite of foreign assaults. The spirit they infused was kept up by saintly persons like Damajipant and Janardanpant by setting inspiring examples of self-sacrifice and devotion to God. This latter Janardan pant was the Guru of Ekanath. The great Nrisinha Saraswati, the great Yogi Changadeo, the great devotee Daso pant, Moraya Gosavi of Chichawada contributed not a little to the upkeep of the religious consciousness of Maharashtra. In 1528 Ekanath who is revered as only next to Jnaneshwar, was born and his life and teachings played a most important part in moulding the religious life of the people. He completed his illustrious career in 1598, ten years after which our saint and hero Tukaram took birth. It is indeed a happy coincidence that in the very same year the patriotic saint and the national Guru Ramadas was also born. Thus the spirit of religious consciousness that started from Jnaneshwar found its synthetic fulfilment in the sacred lives of Ramadas and Tukaram and ultimately found an eloquent expression in the sturdy nationalism of the Mahrattas under their heroic leader, Shivaji.

Tukaram was born in 1608. At the time of his birth his family was not quite poor. It owned some land and houses and was following the profession of shop-keeping. Though the exact year of his birth is still a matter of doubt, the main events of his life cannot be doubted, they being told in his own abhangas—poems written in Marathi, which in fact stand as the most authentic document for any of his biographers. The blessed pair Bolhoba and Kanakai, the parents of Tukaram, were both religious and kind-hearted and they never sent away any hungry soul unfed from their ever-hospitable door. They used to serve many Vaishnava Sadhus with their whole heart whenever any opportunity presented itself. Their heart being filled with the milk of human kindness and devotion to God, and their hands engaged in the service of the devotees, they passed their days happily. They married their three sons in their boyhood. Tukaram when he was first married was about 13 years old; but soon after, his first wife being found

asthmatic, his parents married him a second wife named Jijayi, who came of a rich family of Poona. Bolhoba after enjoying a prosperous family life till his old age, one day asked his eldest son Sawaji to shoulder the responsibilities of the family and free him from the anxieties so that he might go abroad for pilgrimago and pass his last days in prayer and devotion. But Sawaji being of religious temperament from his boyhood humbly replied that he had resolved to take to the life of renunciation and not to be entangled in family affairs. Then Bolhoba called upon Tukaram to look after the family affairs, giving him necessary instructions on the duties of household, and advised him to be careful in all his business-concerns and to act in such a way as would tend to his betterment in the end. Dutiful as he was Tukaram took up all the responsibilities of his father to his great relief and began to study all the household matters. As he was thoroughly honest and loving to all, he soon became prosperous in his trade within a year. Many began to praise him highly for his abilities which he showed in various ways in manipulating household duties, though so young. At this phenomenal success his parents were much pleased. It may be noted here that Tukaram was a devoted son of his parents, especially of his mother. His devotion to his mother was remarkable and great, which is amply visible in his inspired abhangas even in later life. Devotion towards one's mother is taken as a sign of greatness which can be traced as the very seed of greatness in all great men such as Swami Vivekananda, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Napoleon, Shivaji and others ; so also it was in Tukaram from the beginning.

Till his 17th year Tukaram was fortunate enough to enjoy the parental happiness. His father died suddenly. His death was immediately followed by the death of his first wife and his first son ; then came the turn of Kanakai, his beloved mother. The next year his elder brother Sawaji after the death of his wife took to wandering on pilgrimago which was his long cherished determination. All these calamities coming as they did one after the other gave repeated shocks to Tukaram's mind and made him apathetic towards the world more and more until at last he became fully disinterested in all the worldly affairs. He began to devote much of his time thereafter to Bhajanam and Nama-Smaranam. He became indifferent to collect dues from his customers. Some people began to take undue advantage of his goodness of nature, and Tukaram had to incur loss every year. The creditors began to press him for money and at home his second wife Jijayi who was a second Zanthippi of Socrates in her furious temper, began to scold him with unsparing words. To crown all, his cattle died. Some wicked persons even went so far as to

taunt him to his face saying, "This is the result of the name of the Vithal which you are uttering constantly." To try his luck abroad he went with some bags of chillies to Konkan side where also people cheated him of the little money he got by selling them. Jijayi borrowed money for him again with which he bought salt and went abroad; this time he got some profit, but on his way home he saw some poor Brahmins suffering from hunger. Being unable to bear the sight he took pity on them and gave them all he had.

Just after this in 1629 there occurred a great famine which worked havoc in Poona and its vicinity; many people died of hunger. There was no water to drink. Cattle died by hundreds as they could not get fodder. Tukaram's first wife died of hunger; his pet son Santoba followed her. His sorrows reached climax. But the miseries were a blessing in disguise to Tukaram; for a time the thoughts of his past life, his prosperous days, his father's death, the going away of his elder brother, his poverty and the sad death of his own wife and son crossed his brain too much. To crown all, Jijayi's scoldings added fuel to the fire and made him peaceless all the more. From the worldly point of view all these calamities are counted as misfortunes but so far as Tukaram is concerned, these proved a blessing to him for they brought out the real mettle of which he was made. We find here the real seed of his greatness. He collected himself and became fully conscious of the perishability of the worldly vanities. A spirit of self-confidence was kindled in him and his life took quite a new turn. In the agony of his heart he exclaimed: "O Vithoba, I do not care for the public opinion; the whole *samsar* has become like a vomit to me and I wholeheartedly resort to Thy holy feet."

Seeing that this world is momentary, he decided to spend his time in meditation on the Lord. One day he disappeared from home. The next day everybody was talking about him as to where he might have gone. His wife though a shrew was much devoted; she sent Kanhoba, younger brother of Tukaram, in search of him. Tukaram was found on Bhamnath hill near by, engaged in Bhajanam. After much request and pressure Tukaram came home. The joy of the family knew no bounds and Jijayi fed him to the utmost satisfaction of her heart. One day he took all the documents and papers with a view to throw them into the waters of the Indrayani. Then Kanhoba interrupted him saying, "You have now become a Sadhu but what shall I live upon?" Thereupon Tukaram gave him his share and the rest he threw into the Indrayani. Thenceforward he lived by begging and took a vow not to touch coin. In this way he renounced Kanchan, one of the two greatest obstacles in the path of God-realisation. Thereafter

his daily routine became one of continuous prayer, study of the Gita-commentary of Jnaneshwar, meditation upon the Lord and Harikirta nam. The greater portion of his time was spent in the Vithoba temple. As he progressed in Sadhana he could meditate longer and longer. On every Ekadasi day he used to go to Pandarpur. He visited all the Samadhis (cemeteries) of the past Maharastrian saints of his sect.

Tukaram belonged to the Varakari Sampradaya, some of the important beliefs and dogmas of which are indeed worth noticing. Their Deity is Gopalakrishna of Pandarpur known as Vithoba or Vithal. Their ideal is to reach the stage of Jnanothar Bhakti, that is devotion after the realisation of Adwait. Highest knowledge and highest devotion is one and the same. Namasmaranam and Harikirtanam are the chief Sadhanas. 'Rama-Krishna Hari' is their chief Mantram. Saints, Brahmins, cows and guests are worshipped as the manifestations of God. They use the rosary of beads of Tulsi. Tulsi plant is much revered ; on the first Ekadasi of Ashar and Kartik they must go to Pandarpur. Mahashivaratri, all Ekadasis and Mondays must be observed as Vrata. Non-killing and non-injury are strictly enjoined. Varnashrama-dharma is also observed. However, Tukaram strictly adhered to all the injunctions as stated above and made a steady progress in the path of spirituality. Then as a fulfilment of his intense longing for a spiritual guide, the Guru appeared in Tukaram's dream and initiated him. He makes a special mention of this incident in one of his abhangas as follows : Really, Guru blessed me with his hand on my head. He asked for one fourth of a seer of ghee for dinner, but as I was in slumber I forgot. I do not remember if there was any mistake of mine in serving him. He disappeared in haste, telling me Ragava Chaitanya and Keshava Chaitanya as the names of his Guru. His own name he gave out as Babaji (Chaitanya) and he gave me the Mantram 'Rama-Krishna Hari.'

Some days after this he had another dream which he describes as follows : " Namadeva (previous Maharashtra saint) appeared with Panduranga in my dream and told me to compose poems instead of speaking other useless words." In such a mysterious way Tukaram got his inspiration. Then he began to compose poems one after the other. Thenceforth his Harikirtanam, the pure stream of divine love which flowed from his gifted heart, attracted many souls inspite of themselves. This inspired poetry began to touch the cord of human heart and smoothly awoke the devotional sentiment in others. Many began to be his admirers and followers. Crowds of people began to flock to hear him and showed him their respect. But all the same Tukaram with his child-like simplicity and unassuming nobility went on doing

his selfless work of awakening the masses and injecting true religious spirit in them. He is the most outspoken saint in his own abhangas. His abhangas are as it were the minute records of the spiritual stages which every aspirant is to pass through. They serve as a sign-post on the path of spirituality. He is seen to pray to the Lord, uncovering every minute defect of his mind and soliciting His help to control and clear off his shortcomings. At times he becomes disappointed and with loving importunities beseeches the Lord to quell the stormy passions of his heart. He again and again impresses on the mind that money, women and fame are the chief obstacles in the way, which very few can overcome. He holds money as contemptible as beef and says: "Women appear as dangerous as she-bears. In the company of women God is forgotten, Bhajanam stops, mind becomes uncontrollable. This beauty of women is the real seed of all sorrows and degradation. A Sadhu must be very cautious, otherwise he will be ruined." Once a lady went with a bad motive to him in solitude when he was absorbed in Bhajanam on Bhandara Hill. Tukaram understood her intention and said: "We are the servants of Vishnu, we look upon all the ladies except wedded wives as our divine Mother, Rakhumai. You go to some one else; I cannot bear your degraded state." He was sincere and persevering all throughout and did not care for honour or insult heaped upon him by the people from time to time. Most of his time he used to spend in the solitude of the three hills, Bhudara, Bhamnath, and Gorada where he remained in communion with the Lord. The sublime silence and the fascinating beauty of nature stirred his soul to its inmost depths and awakened in him an intense feeling of Vairagyam, whereby he got encouraged all the more in his spiritual practices. In his abhangas he describes his experiences of this solitude: "We are free to choose any place we like, with the earth for our seat and sky as the bower. We can sing songs to the Lord with the trees and creepers as our relatives, animals and birds as our companions. Here we are safe from the merits and demerits of others." In this way, day after day his taste for solitude increased. As the Bhakti deepened his mind became free from egotistic defects and became absorbed in Namasmaranam so much so that it went on constantly inspite of himself.

As he was going through these continuous Sadhanas for five or six years, alternately, spending the day time in the jungles on the hills, and nights in the temple conducting Harikirtanam where the people used to come to drink the nectar of his inspired teachings and devotion, his fame spread all over the country like fragrance. At this time there was a famous influential orthodox Brahmin of great learning named Rameshwar Bhatt at Vagholi. He did not like that

Tukaram, a Shudra, should preach religion and expound the truths of the Vedas, and what he disliked most was that the Brahmins should bow down to him as a religious teacher. Coming to know that Tukaram had a temple in his place where before the image of Vithoba he performed the Kirtanam and where throngs of people came to hear him, he devised a plan to hoot him out altogether from the place. He sent a letter to the patil of Dehu, the place of Tukaram, to drive him out from the village. Accordingly he read the letter to Tukaram at which his heart was, as it were, broken. Praying to God he started for Vagholi. Reaching there he bowed down to Rameshwar when the latter was performing Sandhya, and began to recite the poems at which Rameshwar told him: "You being a Shudra, have no right to preach the truths of the Sruti, which come out so profusely in your words." Then Tukaram replied: "I began composing poems because of Vithoba's order, but all that I have said in my poems has proved quite useless because you, a Brahman, a real manifestation of God, do not approve of it. Henceforward I will stop composing according to your bidding. But what shall I do with the poems I have composed up till now?" Rameshwar replied: "Throw all your manuscripts into the water." Tukaram yielded and came back to Dehu. He tied the bundle of manuscripts to two big stones and throw it into the Indrayani. Very soon Tukaram became an object of criticism and censure. He being unable to stand the sarcasm of the people and their fling at Vithoba, went in front of the temple and remained unmoved on a stone there, praying, "Oh God, it is really wonderful that though devoted to Thee I have become an object of hatred and enmity to the people. Alas! why should I blame Thee? I am sure my services and devotion to Thee are not sincere. It will not be proper on my part to blame Thee unless I give over everything unto Thee, even my life and Jiva Bhava." When Tukaram was thus lying down for thirteen days with a strong determination to give up his life, Rameshwar Bhatt one day on his way to the temple of Naganath whom he revered much, began to feel, all of a sudden, a burning sensation all over the body. Many physicians and medicines were tried to no effect. Then he went to Alandi the place of Jnaneshwar's Samadhi and remained there as he had faith in Jnaneshwar. Meanwhile on the thirteenth day of the steadfast and sincere devotion of Tukaram, God appeared before him in the form of Vithal and gave him the assurance that his book was safe. Towards the dawn of the 14th day, some devotees saw in their dream that the manuscript of Tukaram's abhangas was safely floating on the water of the river. Accordingly all got up and at once went to the river-side only to find the fruition of their dream to their great joy and wonder. The manuscript was brought out safe from the

water with the loud cries of Rama-Krishna Hari and taken to the place where Tukaram was lying. He opened his eyes and saw the devotees coming with the manuscript which God had protected. Tukaram could not control his joy; his heart over-flowed with devotion. He praised the kindness of God with tearful eyes and prayed: "Thou art the embodiment of kindness, Lord of lords; pardon me, I shall not trouble Thee again even if the wicked are ready to cut off my head." In the meantime Ramoshwar was told by Jnaneshwar in a dream that unless he apologised to Tukaram for what he had done he would not be cured of his disease." Rameshwar had already got the news of the miraculous restoration of the manuscript from the water. He was overwhelmed with remorse and wrote a letter with great humility to Tukaram describing his own pitiable condition and praising him for his greatness. Tukaram sent a reply in the form of an abhanga which reads as follows: "He who is pure at heart his enemies become friends, and tigers and serpents cannot injure him. Poison acts on him as nectar. Miseries are blessings to him; troubles from others teach him the principles of ethics; fire becomes cool to him as the heart of every being is the abode of Narayana; all revere him with love. Know this from my experience which Narayana has blessed me with." Rameshwar was moved; the sword of iron being touched with touch-stone was turned into gold,—Rameshwar was completely changed. He yielded, he prayed and became one of the foremost disciples of Tukaram. Now Tukaram saw God. His inspiration was backed by actual realisation. He became the messenger. His heart became the very drawing-room of the Lord. His body shone with a divine light. Henceforward his important work of giving spiritual impetus to all irrespective of caste began. Many thirsty souls found in his teachings the much-coveted nectar which carried them beyond birth and death. The important work of mass-awakening being most smoothly carried on by Tukaram, Shivaji, the founder of the Maharastra empire got the help of the masses in time to fulfil his mission.

Though for a superficial reader many of his abhangas seem contradictory to one another a minute student of his poems will clearly find that he speaks in different moods on different occasions referring to different individuals according to their *adhi-kara*. As he had composed different poems from different stages, we can clearly mark his progress from a Dualist to a qualified Monist and then to a pure Advaitist. It is wrong to class him as one of Ramanuja's sect. Of course, he is more for Bhakti than for Jnana, his temperament being emotional. His humility is unsurpassed. His sympathy for the

suffering and the down-trodden is great. Though he owes much of his inspiration to Ekanath and Jnanadeva, the influence of Namadev on him is unquestionably the most potent. Throughout the day and night except a few hours when he used to take rest, poems used to come out from his lips. It was quite impossible to take down all the poems ; many must have been destroyed and many are still unpublished. That is why we have got only eight thousand and odd abhangas at present.

Some interesting incidents happened during the closing period of his life. The well-known Shivaji who was much devoted to saints from his boyhood, one day sent a deputation to Tukaram who happened to be at Lohagaum at that time, with some jewellery, horses, torches, etc., as presents to request him to come to his palace at Poona. But Tukaram did not even condescend to look at the precious presents, but sent them back with a letter containing nine abhangas addressed to God : " These torches, umbrella, and horses are not for good. Oh king of Pandarpur (Vithoba), why dost Thou wish to allure me with these ? This kind of honour I treat as a pig's dung ; Thou art giving me just the things I do not want. Everything is ordained by Thy will, Pandurang ; Thou knowest my heart. I stick to Thee and Thy feet alone." Then in the same letter he wrote to Shivaji : " We are free from all desires and attractions ; a king or an ant, gold or earth is same to us : our wealth is very great ; we are the lords of the three worlds. Money is like beef to us. What can you give us ? Utter the name of Vithal ; I shall be much pleased if you only do this much. Remember that all the *siddhis*, nay, even the Moksha can be had, but to get the feet of the Lord is difficult." After receiving this letter Shivaji himself came one day to listen to his Kirtanam (devotional songs) which attracted him more and more ; so Shivaji began to visit him very often. One night Shivaji was so much impressed by his Kirtanam that instead of returning to Poona, he stayed at Dehu with Tukaram. Shivaji's mother being anxious that he might leave off politics and become a Sadhu, hurried up to Dehu. That night Tukaram spoke on Varnashrama-Dharma, which made Shivaji take up his duties in right earnest. Another day the Pathans coming to learn that Shivaji was listening to the Kirtanam inside the temple, lay in ambush outside with a view to catch hold of him ; but to their utter surprise and bewildernment the Pathans saw thousands of Shivajis all of the same appearance rushing out from inside the temple ! Thus they were frustrated in their fiendish attempts.

Shivba Kasar was one among the chief disciples of Tukaram. He was a rich fellow of Lohagaum but was extremely stingy. Formerly he used to criticise him, but after listening to his soul-enrapturing

Kirtanam he became one of the most devoted disciples of Tukaram. One day he invited Tukaram to a dinner at his house and when Tukaram was taking bath Shivba Kasar's wife who had become enraged at Tukaram for her husband's sudden change of attitude towards her poured a bucketful of boiling water over his body, 'which burnt him severely. Tukaram did not get angry but only pitied her. Afterwards it is said that she suffered from bad leprosy and she repented of her wicked deed; Rameswar Bhatt advised her husband to apply the mud from the place where Tukaram had taken bath and thus she was cured of that fell disease.

The following instance shows how far Tukaram was magnanimous towards his enemies and had a mastery over his anger. There was one hypocrite, Mambaji by name. He grew extremely jealous of Tukaram for the latter's universal popularity. Mambaji wanted to take revenge. As his house was situated next to Tukaram's Vithoba temple, one she-buffalo of Tukaram once made her way into Mamabaji's garden and ate vegetables and some plants. Then Mambaji strewed the way round the garden with big thorns thereby obstructing the path leading to the temple. Tukaram removed them to a side a little from the way so that people coming to the temple might not be pricked. This was too much for the wicked man who beat him right and left with the thorny plants, so much so that Jijayi, wife of Tukaram, had to pick out the thorns from his back; but Tukaram as he was peace incarnate instead of getting angry went to Mamboji's house and began to massage his hands softly saying, "Oh what a cruel man I am! The whole blame is on me; your hands must have been hurt." This melted the heart of that mischievous man and turned him into one of his most trusted friends.

In this way Tukaram lived a life of devotion and service, exerting himself all the while for the uplift of the sunken and the distressed souls.

The end of a glorious life drew near. Tukaram, only a few days before his final exit from this mortal world said to his wife: "I am going to Vaikuntha; I am called by the God; you also come along with me; we both will be honoured there." But Jijayi was not willing to leave *samsara*. In 1649 A. D. on the second day of the second half of Falguna, Tukaram came singing Bhajanam with his disciples under a tree where his body was illumined with a divine halo that dazzled the eyes of his disciples. He suddenly disappeared and his disciples remained there for 3 days and afterwards discovered his blanket and "Tal" on the very same spot where he had sung the glories of the Lord with them. Thus Tukaram who came to this world from Vaikuntha to teach the truths of Religion and Bhakti went back to that sacred abode after the fulfilment of his Mission.

GROWTH OF AHIMSA AS AN IDEA IN INDIA

By *Raman Chandra Bhattacharya, M.A.*

Primitive man wanted self-gratification and there was a clash of interests, involving struggle and blood-shed. He did not like to be miserable and to avoid much of his sorrow and misery he soon learnt to spare some of his egotistic impulses. Onward from that supreme psychological moment, the idea of non-injury has steadily been gaining ground.

The story of the early stages of its development is with some unknown record-keeper. But during the time of the Vedas, the earliest human record, Ahimsa was extended even beyond the circle of men. *Ma Himsayat Sarva-bhutani* is only too clear a statement to be construed to mean non-injury to men alone. The conception at this stage was not generally regarded as more than a matter of opinion.

There had been a ghastly revelation in bloody sacrifices in ancient times, and the Brahmanic culture developed a horridly complex form of ritualism and sacrifice. But one wing of the Brahmanic people persisted in denouncing bloody sacrifices. Their case was voiced forth effectively in the Satapatha Brahmana. It declared with authority that the spirit of sacrifice had passed from men to horses, to cows and to goats consecutively, rendering each unworthy of sacrifice one by one, and that ultimately took its rest in the grains which were to be sacrificed henceforward in the forms of *Paradasas* or cakes. This was not a mere theory only, for every line of this particular Brahmana was binding on at least a section of the Brahmins.

The more intelligent section of the Brahmanic people failed to see the reasonableness of the attempt to compel gods by elaborate mechanical rituals to grant them their desires or to appease a wrathful god or to bribe another more liberal with sacrifices which were to their liking. Eventually they took to introspection. With intellectual refinement came in finer feelings and emotions till the Upanishadic seers had to accept Ahimsa as one of the fundamentals of religion. In *Chhandogya*, one of the earliest of Upanishads, the Rishi Ghora Angirasa exhorts his Kshatriya pupil 'Krishna, the Son of Devaki' to practise Ahimsa equally with *Satya* (truthfulness), *Dana* (charity), etc.

The same Krishna, in his turn, with equal emphasis preached the principle of Ahimsa to his warrior-disciple, Arjuna. Strangely enough, this teaching was imparted in a grim field of battle. Whatever might

have been the meaning of his own teacher, Krishna did not want his disciple to refrain from bloodshed. Far from that, he inspired him to fight, which he considered to be his disciple's *duty*. It is not difficult to explain this apparent incongruity if the Ahimsa of Krishna is understood as an attitude of mind which taboos, envy, jealousy and hatred.

So far the concept of Ahimsa could touch only the brains and hearts of individuals or even small groups. But what if unscrupulous hands worked mischief on them? Neighbours had to be persuaded to accept and work up to it. Orders appeared to advocate its cause. Time's call to raise it to a supreme doctrinal status was answered by the Ajivakas and the Jainas. It was an age when not less than sixteen pronounced powers vied with one another for imperial position. The imperialisms of Kosala and Magadha eventually turned Kasi into a horrid field of battle. As for smaller powers, their more powerful neighbours never lost an opportunity to prey upon them. In a word the vast tract of land extending from the eastern border of the Kuru-Panchala country (the Punjab) as far as the Anga-Mahajanapada (Bhagalpur) was during this period overflowed with human blood. It is indeed a strange coincidence that the principal Ahimsa cults of India had their birth on this very fertile soil just at this propitious hour of intense necessity and that the scions of the fighting classes, the royal Kshatriya families came forward to uphold the doctrine of Ahimsa at this time.

The Jaina and Ajivaka Ahimsa, being reactions against the extreme forms of 'Himsa' on the part of the imperialists, was naturally carried to the other extreme. The Buddha wanted to avoid either extremes. He did not like the idea of making human life burdensome by thrusting on it unnecessarily scrupulous conscientiousness of the Jainas and the Ajivakas. Unlike his contemporary teachers, but like the teacher of the Gita (another Kshatriya) he conceived Ahimsa as a mental attitude. The Vinaya enjoining on the Bhikkus not to partake of any animal food, if the animal was specially sacrificed on their account, is a clear pronouncement of the master on the point at issue. Besides, we cannot explain otherwise the conduct of the master himself at his last dinner with pork-eater Channa.

There must be practical difficulties when we depend for a thing on the good sense of mankind in general. One of the principal disciples of Buddha realised this fact. Ere long he quarrelled with his master on this account. He wanted to revert to the Jaina and Ajivaka conception that adherence to Ahimsa involved a general proscriptions of killing of animals. It was certainly a lower (though a more

practicable) form of thought and the Buddha, with his superior culture would not acquiesce in it. Devadatta had to separate himself from his master before the latter could be persuaded to accept Ahimsa to mean non-killing literally.*

If Mahavira, Gosala, and Devadatta understood Ahimsa as non-killing, the later Buddhists also found it convenient to accept it in that sense. The finer import attached to it by the founder of Buddhism could bear any meaning to cultured intellects alone. King Asoka, the Great, therefore thought it prudent to preach Ahimsa in its grosser sense. The Ahimsa cult of his edicts enjoins non-killing of and non-injuring to all animals with considerable force.

The Gupta age of the Indian history is the age of Hindu renaissance. The Pauranic form of Hinduism that developed in this period is a compromise of ancient Brahmanism with the popular religions of the age. Pauranic Vaishnavism absorbed in itself most of what was lauded in Buddhism, especially its devout zeal for Ahimsaism. Vaishnavism is a living force in India even now and it, in all its forms—Vishnuite, Krishnaite, or Ramaiyat—is supremely an Ahimsa cult till our time.

If Buddhism is mainly responsible for activity of Ahimsaism among the Southern Vishnuite cults, Jainism is still more so for its unmitigated influence over the Ramaiyat and other cults of Gujrat. Age-long mechanical operation of Ahimsaism among the different sects and denominations scared away the poetry about it. Mahatma Gandhi, the enquirer, discovered that poetry afresh as a result of his "Experiments with Truth". Gandhi, the student, became Gandhi, the prophet of neo-Ahimsaism at the very moment when he carried out his 'good-will' to man and beast and vowed for 'non-killing' only as a secondary principle, as a more logical conclusion of that universal good-will.

THE RELATION BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND THE UPANISHADS

(Continued from the October issue)

By Prof. A. K. Sharma

V.

Buddha's discourses on Nirvana remind us naturally of the goal presented by the Upanishads. The culmination of all spiritual discipline, in the view of the latter, is Brahma-Vidya. This knowledge is

* The black picture of Devadatta painted by some Buddhist story-tellers has no truth about it. Devadatta seems to have been an honest man of ascetic temperament. His sect was thriving in Bengal even at the time of Hwen Tsang.

summed up in the cryptic formula, "Everything is Brahman". Of course it does not fit into our habitual scheme of things. Life as we live it is superficial : it is enveloped by Maya, illusion. Hence the world appears to us to consist of a plurality of separate persons and things ; it appears too as the arena on which one thing is pitched against another, and the human self against all the rest. In this way life is riddled with false conceptions and we are being daily cheated out of Reality. But knowledge has a saving grace. When it pervades the mind, the veil of Maya is lifted, appearances vanish and we stand face to face with Reality itself. This is Emancipation.

Like Nirvana, Emancipation is in a sense extinction. All evils whether they be physical or moral, have their roots ultimately in the false conception of individualities. The world of individuals is a world of conflict. Even so-called amity, peace and good will, are only forms of truce ; because the disposition which makes for war is still there. Individuality tends to separate ; to individualise is to exclude ; and the greater the attempt to exclude things from one another, the more likely they are to come into conflict. This looks paradoxical ; it is none the less true. From the human point of view, to be an individual is to move between two poles, self on the one side and all objects on the other. These objects constitute a system of means to satisfy certain personal interests ; they are to be desired or avoided, loved or hated and in this way their values are determined by their capacity to purvey to human needs. No wonder that they lead to feverish excitements and mad-making activities. But when knowledge is acquired life is given a new orientation, desire and pain vanish, activities cease, and egoism is extinguished.

The dead ego is only the stopping-stone on which we ascend to higher life. With the shifting of the old stand-point, the conception of the world undergoes a radical alteration. The well-defined physiognomy of things changes, their clear-cut forms coalesce, nay, their very concreteness melts away. The emancipated man sees all things quivering with one life, the same as his ; he mirrors everything in himself, and is in turn reflected in it ; he recognises his essential unity with the universe and feels one with it. To him the distinctions of mine and thine, friend and foe, higher and lower, animate and inanimate, have absolutely no meaning. He maintains what, in the absence of a better expression, may be called spiritual impartiality. He loves not only his neighbour, but also the neighbour's dog and the plants which grow in his garden. He is patient and self-restrained ; and there is about him an atmosphere of repose, calmness and peace. His being the way of sight and not of logic, his certitude is not assailed by any

kind of doubt. He has broken the rough shell of *Maya* and is serenely contemplating the pearl of Reality.

The condition of atonement is indeed ineffable. It may be called neither existence nor non-existence, neither stability nor change, neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. "There no sun shines, no moon, no glimmering star; nor yonder lightning; the fire of earth is quenched." It is not to be comprehended, either by the senses or by thought; and weak human language is utterly inadequate to describe it. It is beyond all empirical distinctions; and for this reason it is not capable of definite formulation.

A Buddhist reading the Upanishads will be surprised at the similarity between their teaching and that of his master. When he comes to the topic of Emancipation, the surprise will grow into astonishment, for Nirvana and Emancipation are not merely similar but almost identical. Both are spiritual existences to be realised here on earth; both involve the annihilation of the ego and the transcending of ordinary life; in both, permanent spiritual values are conserved, and both are states of atonement with the Supreme Reality. Naturally the suggestion would occur to him that the ancestral home of his own spiritual life is in the Upanishads. If a counter-suggestion were also to occur, that it might after all be a case of the coincidence of genius, he will recall how the utterances of Buddha on the Uncreated, word for word, with those of the Upanishads on Brahman. He will recall also how Buddha met two young scholars, Vasetta and Bhawaja, in a mango-grove near Kosala; how he pointed out to them that the Brahman priests of those days were not practising what was necessary to gain *Brahma-Vidya*; and how he assured them that he could put them on the straightest path to the kingdom of Brahman; because he was already residing there and was, as it were, a native of it. These two considerations would clinch the argument; and our inquirer would be led to the inevitable conclusion that the voice which spoke of Nirvana was the voice of Buddha, but that the thought was of the Upanishads.

But in translating Emancipation into Nirvana, Buddha gave it a practical turn by emphasising the normal and the psychical aspects of it. The Upanishads, it is well-known, were addressed to men who had retired from the world, and who for this reason were not distracted by the needs for action. Relatively speaking, what they suffered from, or thought they suffered from, was a false conception of things, rather than a wrong direction of the will. To them salvation meant the discovery of truth; so they longed for knowledge. This the teachers recognised; hence they laid stress on the perfection of intelligence, and described Emancipation as a kind of higher knowledge.

Buddha's atmosphere was altogether different. He had to teach men of the world, men who were more concerned with action than with thought. The will being dominant in practical life, Emancipation, in their case, was tantamount to moral regeneration: so the teacher caught hold of the will, gave it the right direction, and explained Nirvana as a kind of moral perfection.

The other aspect which was emphasised by Buddha was selflessness. The men who had gone into forest-retreats were mellow with age and experience; and those who were not, were put through a course of special discipline, so that none of them was obsessed with egoism to any dangerous extent. In that situation it was possible for the teachers to adopt a standpoint which was universal, at any rate, not merely human. Therefore Emancipation became the relinquishment of the individualising tendency in general and not the overcoming of egoism in particular. Whether the ancient sages were conscious of the inadequacy of the geocentric point of view in the realm of knowledge, is more than we can say, but they taught as if they were so conscious. How could Buddha do likewise? His men had all the defects of worldliness: to them life was not geocentric, not even anthropocentric, but essentially egocentric. With penetrating insight Buddha realised that, if he could get them to discard selfishness other good things would follow as a matter of course. This accounts for the fact that he specially argued against the notion of egoism, as if it were the gravamen of the charge. Naturally Nirvana appeared as a state of extinction.

Thus both lead to the same goal in view. But the Upanishads gave it the appearance of a theory, stated it as a proposition describing the nature of Reality, and advocated it as a truth which ought to be grasped. Buddha, on the other hand, attempted to work it out in life and presented it as a task, as a condition which ought to be reached by ordinary men. He did it in the only way possible, *viz.*, by addressing the will rather than the intelligence.

VI

Brahma-Vidya was the prerogative of a spiritual aristocracy. As a rule it was not imparted either to a woman or to an outcaste; and even in the case of eligibles it was laid down as a precondition that they should have fulfilled all social obligations and have then withdrawn from participation in worldly affairs. Life in the days of the Upanishads was one long spiritual discipline; it was divided into successive periods of studentships, of a house-holder, and of retirement, and each was regulated by strict rules of conduct. It is very likely that those who had lived life in that way looked forward, like

Rabbi Ben Ezra, to a glorious old age in the belief that "the best is yet to be, the last of life for which the first was made." It is likely also that they got a vision of something of permanent value, of an eternal verity, dim, vague, nebulous, yet definite enough to attract. Its power must have been so compelling that they determined to pursue it at any cost, even by sacrificing everything which they hitherto cherished most dear. Impelled by this motive they actually renounced the world, went into forest-retreat, and there commenced a new spiritual life in a purer atmosphere and on a higher plane. The sages taught them how to translate the faint vision into vivid reality. The restraint of the senses, the subdual of passions, contentment, endurance, concentration; these were the prescribed means. Some or all of these were emphasised according to the special needs of the disciples. Thus one might need, more than anything else, the subdual of his passions; another, freedom also from distractions; and a third, subdual, freedom, and peace. Sometimes they were described in general terms, as the suspension of the activities of the mind, or as purification of nature by the purification of the intellect, or even as mental serenity. In addition, faith in the end was everywhere presupposed, so much so that it was taken as a separate means in a late Vedantic work. The Maitrayana Upanishad summed up all this in one clean statement: "Control of breath, restraint of the senses, attention, discrimination, meditation and absorption: these are the methods of realisation."

This Upanishad has a peculiar historical value. It came into existence at a time when the atmosphere was charged with ideas prophetic of Buddhism. To us, therefore, it serves as the connecting link between Buddhism on the one hand, and the earlier Upanishads on the other; and to Buddha himself it must have been a source of inspiration more direct than the older ones. It has so much in common with Buddha's teaching that Cowell opined that it might indeed be post-Buddhist in point of date. Even so it is an argument in favour of the view that Buddhism and the Upanishads are interdependent. But as a matter of fact it was anterior to Buddha, as has been convincingly proved by Max Muller.

The Maitrayana was also the main basis of Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras. Patanjali lived after Buddha; and some of his fundamental conceptions are patently Buddhist; and yet, astonishingly enough, he claimed the authority of the Upanishads for this teaching. In his view there was nothing extraordinary in incorporating the teaching of Buddha in a work which was explicitly intended to give a practical turn to the ideas taught in the Upanishads. This lends a powerful support to the views adopted in this paper. Be it remembered that Yoga is one of the orthodox systems, which has had a widely formative influence on Hindu life and thought.

To return to the methods. To be able to understand and to appreciate them, it is necessary to have some notion of the metaphysical psychology from which they were but practical deductions. It would appear

that man consists of a *purusha* and a *prakriti*, i.e., soul bottled up in world-stuff. While the former is static, change is inherent in the latter. Originally the *purusha* was independent of *prakriti*. But something happened—we need not inquire what; and the mischief started. *Prakriti* began to evolve, first into a sort of sub-consciousness; next, into consciousness in its dual aspect of subject and object; then, in divergent channels, into the sensorium commune called mind, into the five organs of action, into five sense organs, into various kinds of protomatter; and finally, in a linear direction from protomatter into the gross matter of which the body is composed. It is *prakriti* which really sees, thinks, and feels; grows and decays; laughs at a joke or weeps tears. Those are reflected in the soul, and the poor thing deludes itself into the idea that all this really belongs to it. In a weak moment the Prince drinks himself away into intoxication and forgetfulness; and under the delusion that he is really poor, he goes about the street begging from door to door. The soul has fallen from a high estate and allowed itself to be caught in the wiles of *prakriti*.

But the seers prescribed a heroic remedy. *Prakriti* could be turned back the way it came, and the soul could be restored to its original glory. To control breath, senses, mind is to involute them into their undifferentiated condition in consciousness. The result is that the external world disappears altogether. Nevertheless, will it not come back in the shape of images? But then we forget that mind is a sensorium commune, and that the control of it is the control also of the sensory areas of the brain. In the language of autosuggestion, it is the state of the full outcropping of the sub-conscious. Consciousness grows by what it feeds on; and when all its objects have been removed it shrinks almost into nothingness. In this state some ideas may come and go and thus disport themselves in imagination. If at this juncture the sub-conscious is directed towards Brahman, it would attend to it exclusively as though wanting to monopolise it. This is what the Upanishads mean by discrimination. But Brahman has no term and cannot be presented as an idea or image. The difficulty is overcome by substituting a symbol. The word *Am* has no meaning in particular; for this reason it is eminently fitted to represent Brahman. The symbol has thus a dual function; it serves to focus attention and it is also the gateway through which Brahman is reached. It is important to remember that meditation is not on the symbol itself but on its significance. As meditation progresses, the symbol vanishes in the background, and what is left is a deep, dead silence,—the soul in communion with Brahman, or what means the same thing, in communion with itself. Life in this condition is disembodied spirit, and it is described as pure freedom and unconditioned bliss. *Prakriti* has been rolled back, distinctions and limits have been transcended, the old delusion has gone; and the Prince has come to his own. After emerging from this experience the individual finds a new significance in the facts of daily life. It is in this manner that self-control and self-direction are used to attain oneness with the universe. "There is not leather enough to cover the surface of the earth to make it smooth. But put on a shoe and the whole earth will be smooth."—

Extracted from "The Monist," Chicago., U.S.A.

(To be concluded)

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER



एकं त्वमात्मा पुरुषः पुराणः
सत्यः स्वयञ्ज्योतिरनन्त आद्यः ।
नित्योऽचरोऽजस्रसुखो निरञ्जनः
पूर्णोऽद्वयो मुक्त उपाधितोऽमृतः ॥
सत्यव्रतं सत्यपरं विसत्यं
सत्यस्य योनिं निहितं च सत्ये ।
सत्यस्य सत्यमृतसत्यनेत्रं
सत्यात्मकं त्वां शरणं प्रपन्नाः ॥

Oh Lord, Thou art single and the oversoul, the in-
dwelling spirit and the Ancient One ; Thou art identical
with truth and self-effulgent, infinite and the first ; Thou
art eternal, imperishable and of the nature of bliss ever-
lasting, and untainted ; Thou art perfect, without a second
free from appellations and immortal.

Oh Lord, Thou art of truthful vows, and the means
of attaining unto Thee is the way of truth ; Thou art the
true existing entity in the three stages of the world ; Thou
art the origin of the entire creation ; Thou dost pervade it
and art its true essence ; Thou art the Progenitor of
truthful speech and of true behaviour, and Thou art all
truth ; therefore do I take refuge in Thee.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Disciple : Maharaj, for bringing my senses under control I have been trying in various ways, but all of no avail ; now, will you tell me, sir, how I can succeed in my attempt ?

Swami : I shall conquer lust, conquer anger and so on—with such ends in view if you try, you can never conquer them at all. On the otherhand, if you can concentrate your mind on God, the senses and all shall themselves become curbed without much effort on your part. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, the more you proceed eastwards, the further are you off from the west and no energy is specially needed on that account. So, take up this direct method, and do always call upon God and pray to Him ; then the senses and all shall lose their venomous sting upon you in no time.

The way in which you perform Japam and meditation is most superficial. With such a slack enterprise—by an hour's practice or two—God can never be realised. But if you can lose yourself day and night in the contemplation of God, His name and glory, then alone you can be blessed with His vision, otherwise not. That is the only way : be plunged in Sadhana heart and soul ; no more waste of time ; yea, the chance awaits you !

In the primary stage of your Sadhana you should go on increasing your Japam and meditation slowly and steadily little by little. Today if you spend an hour, a few days after add a little time more to it ; and again a few days later, devote a little still more, and so on. In this way you should prolong the time of your spiritual practice, more and more every day. But under momentary enthusiasm you must never increase your Japam and meditation by leaps and bounds. If you violate this law, I warn you

you shall very badly suffer : the reaction that will result from the sudden increase will be too difficult for you to bear unmoved ; and consequently you are likely to undergo a terrible depression in mind. Then you shall have no more inclination for Japam and meditation. It is indeed an arduous task to raise up a depressed mind and set it back to Sadhana once again.

In all spiritual realisations His grace is most essential ; without that no progress is possible. Therefore for grace you must pray to Him with an eager heart. And prayer has a wonderful efficacy of its own ; it pleaseth God so much !

Also in the beginning of your Sadhana you must not let yourself be swayed over by any desires for enjoyment. For you now is the time for complete abstinence, for controlling all desires. By the grace of the Lord when you are once well established in this practice, then you shall have no fear of being soiled by their dirt any more, should they crop up in your mind at any time.

Again those who have embraced the life of a monk after giving up their hearth and home and all, for them it is indeed a sheer low-mindedness to be actuated by any desire for exercising authority over others. For a monk such a motive is the root cause of falling into the bondage again. Therefore you must be very careful about this pitfall, and whatever you may do or see, know it as belonging to God, yourself being simply an instrument in His hand ; and also remember (the words of the Gita), "Being deluded by egotism do men call themselves the master."

To tell a lie is yet another great sin for you. A drunkard or a man who frequents the places of ill fame, can even be trusted, but not in the least he that lies. Verily, it is the blackest of all sins in this world.

You must never find fault with others, nor criticise them. Such a habit is immensely detrimental to one's

own good. By thinking of the evil qualities of others day and night you will surely have them impressed on your own mind, and that, at the cost of the good tendencies that you may possess. So, no good in fault finding! Rather eat, drink, and sing His glory and mix heartily with all and rejoice. But who would listen? It is indeed very bad for Sadhus to group together for finding others' fault and launching a mischievous campaign against them. None but the low-minded do take part in such a shameful action against his fellow-being!

So you must always cultivate the habit of looking into the goodness of a man and doing him honour and praising him even though the least trace of goodness is found in him. Take it from me, my boy, that if you do not show due regard for other's greatness, your mind shall never expand, nor shall you ever be called great in the estimation of people at large.

It is a regular fraud on the part of a Sadhu to accept a householder's offerings without performing due Sadhana in return. The householder supplies him with food and provisions, because he is expected to carry on his Sadhana exclusively having withdrawn himself from all other pursuits of life. So without Sadhana you must not take the advantage of a householder's service; and if you disobey, know that you do so at the cost of your good.

The acceptance of holy alms—no matter in whatever shape it is—from a householder entitles the latter to a share of the former's religious merits. Therefore a Sadhu must accumulate as much merit as would leave a decent remainder after meeting this charge.

Man is composed of both good and bad tendencies; so do not slight him only because the evil ones are visible to you. But considering him as your own counterpart try to rectify him and draw him towards the good through love. If you can do so then alone you do rightly deserve.

to be called a man, otherwise what credit is there in simply crying down a fellow-being !

D. : Maharaj, on some days in my meditation my mind of itself becomes calm and steady, while on others I cannot make it so even with my best efforts ; it runs about to and fro ; now, how to make it steady, sir ?

S. : As you see, my son, ebb and flow in the tide of the Ganges, even so is the case with everything in this world. Your Sadhana too in particular has its ebb and flow. Such occurrence in the beginning, however, is not to be wondered at. But by all means you must stick to your Sadhana ; and if you can carry it on for some time, such phenomenon shall soon stop, then shall flow the mind on in a current, incessant and unobstructed.

Whenever you feel that the mind is calm and steady, then leaving off all works aside engage yourself deeply in Sadhana. Again when you are perturbed in mind and do not feel comfortable, then also you must sit for taking your usual daily exercises regularly, and try to bring the mind under control through discrimination and remonstrances. The mind does not become steady all at once. You must have to 'struggle' and 'struggle' on incessantly, every moment you are to 'struggle'. Through struggle the mind and senses and intellect all shall come round easily.

Remember, my child, since you are a Sadhu, you are expected to be calm and gentle and modest and fair-spoken ; and goodness must flow out through every word you utter, and every action you perform, and through your behaviours and movements. By their contact with you, people must attain peace of mind and be drawn towards God and goodness.

D. : Maharaj, we hear of the spiritual current of holy places ; may I know what is that, sir ?

S. : Yes, every place of pilgrimage has a time when the spiritual current of it sets to flow. At such a time

the mind can be easily pacified by means of Japam and meditation, and also you can feel a great joy at heart.

D. : How to know that time, sir ?

S. : Oh, that is not so difficult to know ; a sincere man can easily catch it at a little advanced stage of his Sadhana.

And regarding Kashi (Benares), it is beyond the pale of all vulgarities of the world ; it is a place of mighty spiritual consciousness. Whatever Sadhana you perform here, that shall multiply itself tenfold ; and also the dormant lion of Mantram gets soon awakened in this sacred place. In Kashi, the land of eternal freedom, Lord Viswanath bestoweth salvation unasked unto all, great or small, rich or poor, virtuous or vicious, and surely unto all alike. He who can procure an honest living in this thrice blessed home of spirituality is verily a man amongst men !

THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

The Indian National Congress shall hold this month its 43rd Session in the Metropolis of Calcutta, and the attention of the whole country has been more or less rivetted upon the significant issues to be determined in this momentous sitting of the Congress ; for on the final denouement of its coming deliberation ultimately rests the cosmic well-being of the three hundred million souls of India. Standing as we do on the threshold of a new epoch it is indeed gratifying to re-call how the once tiny association of not more than four score Indians, launched into being under the stimulus of Occidental political idealism, has, after so many years of continuous struggle, sprung into such a huge political body and today stands with a grim determination to evolve the political destiny of the nation in consonance with the cultural traditions of the land. That the dynamic principle of self-determination which, since the last Great War, has found an

eloquent materialisation in many a land of the East, shall convulse the hearts of the Indians is not at all a matter of surprise. And it gives satisfaction to every lover of freedom that the Indian National Congress is no more a negligible factor in the political life of the Indians but stands as a full-throated organ to voice forth the manifold grievances of the dumb millions of the country and furnishes the much-needed cohesive force to meet the conflicting interests of diverse communities. Fortunately enough, the creed and objective of the Congress after various vicissitudes have been raised from the boredom of an academic talk to a living issue. Hence, it is desirable that the patriotic souls of India who are trying to mould the destinies of the people should weigh in the balance of their past experience how far their activities have hitherto ameliorated the condition of the suffering millions and secured a solid foothold in the consolidated aspirations of the nation. This country of ours should not merely be a geographical complex but a living federation of cultures—a crown of many thoughts ; for in a country like India this is the noblest and the grandest culmination of all our synthetic activities, political, social or spiritual. It is needless to point out that the nation which is guided merely by the political instincts of the race and shuts out all other nobler aspirations of a collective life, can hardly rise above matters of parochial interest and presume to serve mankind through the manifoldness of its spiritual culture and heritage ; nor is it possible to achieve any permanent solidarity in a country of different tongues and different creeds, unless the hearts of the people are wedded to beat to the one single tune of national idealism.

One can hardly be too exhaustive regarding the problems of India. Needless to say, the economic problem far outweighs all others in point of magnitude of the interests involved. In India where seventy-two per cent of her population are engaged in agriculture, industrial development depends to a great extent on the soundness of the agricultural life of the people. But what we find today is neither promising nor calculated to make for any agricultural or industrial regeneration in the near future, unless the scattered forces are properly marshalled to stimulate the latent possibilities of the country in these directions. Through years of reckless exploitation and strangulation of the indigenous

industries of the land, the backbone of the labouring masses has *ipso facto* been broken. The pristine glow of enthusiasm that characterised the sturdy peasantry of India is now lost in the hectic flush of a diseased life, and chill penury has, to say the least, frozen to stagnation the healthy flow of nobler aspirations. That is why the illustrious poet Mr. Edward Carpenter broke out in righteous indignation in the following strain: "India the same.....Five hundred millions sterling from the famished myriads, taken to feed the luxury of Britain, taken without return——while Britain wonders with a pious pretence of innocence why famine follows the flag! Last, but not the least, insult is added to injury. For while she prates the blessings of her Empire, contempt and studied indifference are her methods of administering it." In fact the country is not what it was even a century back. The economic resources have almost been depleted and no positive step has as yet been adopted to stem the efflux of the life-blood of the Indian people. That India excelled all other nations of the world in spinning, weaving and dyeing, and the industrial supremacy continued well-nigh after the end of the 18th century has now become a subject of antiquarian research! The healthy life of the ancient Indians contrasted with the present atrophied state of the people tells its own tale. The extant records of ancient travellers bear an eloquent testimony to the commercial greatness of India and prove beyond doubt that even before the days of Solomon and Hiram, merchants from the different quarters of the globe visited her ports with a view to furnish themselves with her valuable products and manufactures. The great galaxy of historians viz., Strabo, Niarchus, Megasthenes, Polo, Conti, Nikitin and a host of other travellers testify to India's marvellous achievements in the various branches of industrial arts. "Ere yet the Pyramids looked down upon the valley of the Nile,—when Greece and Italy, those cradles of European civilisation, nursed only the tenants of a wilderness,—India was the seat of wealth and grandeur." What a pity such a land of plenty and profusion has, as if through some magic spell, been reduced to a land of paupers and beggars! The Indian masses are to-day no better than the Roman plebs of yore and the actual tillers of the soil seldom have two meals a day! That is why the celebrated orator Burke

while characterising the whole army of modern traders as worse than Tartarian conquerors so eloquently appealed to the bar of humanity for the suffering Indians. Rightly has Sir Daniel Hamilton observed: "If Britain has to leave India as suddenly as Rome had to leave Britain then England shall leave behind a country minus education, minus sanitation and minus money." One third of her population is insufficiently fed and four crores of her people lie down with barely one meal! If this be the state of affairs obtaining in the country, is it not the patriotic duty of every political thinker to devote the major portion of his energy and attention to the industrial uplift of his sunken fellow-countrymen and to stop the further outflow of life of the already famished territory? It must be borne in mind that any attempt for the reconstruction of the political life of the country without any practical scheme for its economic and industrial revival is doomed to failure; for the well-being of the race depends not so much upon empty political talks and formulæ as upon the soundness of its moral and economic backbone.

The most important item in the scheme for economic development in India is the problem of rural reconstruction. The towns have already grown to be the crowded centres of luxury and amusement as well as standing drains upon the material resources of village-life, while uncared-for and tradition-bound the ignorant millions of the villages are grovelling in the sink of superstitious ideas and customs. The pampered section of society, not unlike the "reformed" intellects of the present day, have already bid adieu to the "vicious" association of the "rustics" and taken to a life of ease and comfort in the green-house of polished society in towns. The result has been that "a creeping paralysis has overtaken the villages, and the loss of interest in life is reflected in the steady spread of epidemic diseases. Is it an exaggeration to say," remarks an Anglo-Indian paper, "that within another fifteen years the countryside will be left to jackals and hyaenas?" In the whiz and whirr of political movement the much-needed problem of village-organisation and social reform has been cast into the background. It has been pointed out that any movement that has no solid foundation in the vital principles of life and does not appeal to the social and spiritual instincts of the people can never be expected to produce any

appreciable result. In a country where ninety-five per cent. of the population are steeped in the darkness of ignorance and the average daily income does not go beyond the amount of six pice per capital and where death-roll surpasses the statistics of other civilised races of the world, it is indeed regrettable that this most vital problem of rural reconstruction has not received the amount of attention it deserves from our leaders. The coming Congress, we doubt not, while framing schemes for political emancipation, must feel the ground on which it stands and take *inter alia* the most stupendous problem of the rural reconstruction in India in right earnest.

It cannot be gainsaid that the present political movement has created an unprecedented stir and commotion throughout the length and breadth of India and has called into being a number of quasi-political organisations, all intended for carrying the scattered forces to one rallying point. But it must be borne in mind that the edifice of national life can rise high into the air only in so far as it sinks its foundations deep into the soil of its indigenous culture. And when the nation feels an impulse to make its life count in the grand process of human betterment, it more often than not errs on the side of an over-accentuation on only one aspect of its life. In the flush of enthusiasm many fail to distinguish between patriotism and politics, and forget that patriotism has a far deeper connotation than politics even though the former not unfrequently expresses itself in political activities. The present youth-movement is but one of the most significant expressions of the dynamic Indian nationalism; but it is painful to notice that some of our countrymen have capitalized their budding sentiments to subserve their political ends. The recent speeches of some of the leaders of the youth-movement cannot be characterised as a balanced pronouncement in view of the fact that they have ignored the vital aspects of the student life and have summed up their duties in terms of politics alone. The *Modern Review*, a leading journal in India has, we are glad to find, already struck a note of warning. "We are old fashioned enough," it says, "to believe and assert that the proper duty of students is to study. And, of course, like other people, they have their duties, which are subsidiary. When they leave their schools, colleges or universities for good, let them, if they choose and are fit to

do so, devote themselves entirely to politics or other kinds of social services." We do not mean to taboo any kind of social duties or the political training of the students in the calm and healthy atmosphere of the student life, but what we denounce is the recklessness with which the sentiment of the immature boys are being roused to be diverted to only political end without giving them sufficient scope for the development of their latent potentialities of life and the crystallisation of their nebulous ideas during the period of their academic training. The sweeping proposition of Aristotle that "man is by nature a political animal" is indeed a very hard pill for many of us to swallow especially in a land like India where divinity has been predicated of every living creation by the seers and sages. Is it not a rank blasphemy to label down man only as "a political animal" to the negation of other nobler aspects of human existence? In the West no doubt "political philosophy and its applications have been inseparable from university training from the days of Isocrates, Plato and Aristotle to those of Treitschke, Henry Sidgwick and Widrow Wilson," but in India politics, though a necessary factor in the collective life, did never occupy the greater share of human thought and aspiration and even now cannot be over-accentuated without the concomitant dangers of intellectual and moral breakdown. For the nation that holds fast to politics alone stands on a very uncertain ground, and if the inner spring of national life is thus ignored, India may unfortunately be a victim to disorder and chaos at no distant future. We stand today at the parting of the ways and the whole country looks up to the coming Congress for light and guidance in the uphill and thorny path towards the national goal.

But this is not the whole of the Indian problem. In the hurly-burly of political agitation we have in fact failed to visualise one most vital factor in the scheme of national reconstruction. Needless to say, religion has been the very fundamental basis of the cultural evolution in India, and we have invited the pointed attention of our countrymen to the outstanding phenomenon that unless the Indian aspirations are broadbased upon the stable foundation of a universal religious ideal, no amount of political scheme would touch the deeper springs of our thought and compel the ready acceptance of the people at large. It is indeed.

regrettable that the recent draft "constitution" drawn up by the political leaders of India instead of giving a legitimate share of consideration to the religious aspect of the Indian problem has put it under a ban as it were. Religion, they forget, is the very life-blood of the Indian race, as of every other race on the face of the earth. In India any scheme for political evolution without the background of a healthy religious idealism shall not count in the betterment of human lot. The Indian Social Reformer strikes a true note when it emphatically pronounces: "Whatever else may or may not be true of India, no one can deny that it is a land of religion. Religion is the dominant factor in the lives of the Indian people. The only authority which they instinctively and unquestionably acknowledge is that of religion, the only discipline to which they voluntarily and cheerfully submit is that of religion. When we say, religion, it is not any particular religion we are referring to. The Indian or at least the Hindu attitude, which is the determining factor in this matter, to religion does not make any distinction between religions. And this has been planted in Indian policy from time immemorial. Asoka proclaimed his equal reverence and solicitude for Brahmanas and Shramanas—Hindus and Buddhists. Akbar's policy was founded on the same principle of equal consideration for all religions. The Indian conception of State under all the great Indian rulers included as an integral part of it the protection and support of religion. We seriously suggest that self-governing India cannot depart from this policy which has its roots in the national instincts. To disown religion, and to make it subservient to State policy, is utterly opposed to the national instinct, and it must inevitably lead to the early collapse of the constitution." The foregoing observation is but a re-statement of our historical experience; and in a land where every act of life is tinctured with a religious hue and where the growth and development of social organism is absolutely dependent upon the healthiness of spiritual life, it would indeed be a suicidal step to oust religion from the scheme of our national reconstruction. Whatever theoretical value attaches to the statement that "to expose it (religion) to the legal atmosphere of a constitution is to deprive it of its spontaneity and freedom which are essential to its very existence," it cannot but be admitted that its acceptance as a state-religion by the Hindu and the Mahomedan rulers in the pre-British days fa

from interfering with its "spontaneity and freedom" contributed a good deal to the growth of cosmic national well-being and minimised the petty jealousies and dissensions that characterise now a days all our efforts for "the progressive realisation of the Ideal." We sincerely hope that the coming Congress would deal with this vital problem with a free and dispassionate mind to avert any future catastrophe.

India today is not merely a land of the Hindus or of the Mahomedans but has become a meeting-ground of all the religions of the world. Our recent experience fully corroborates our conviction that the ignorance and misunderstanding of the fundamental principles of the different religions have been the fruitful sources of bloody fights amongst the different communities and even now stand as insuperable barriers to the consummation of political solidarity. As already hinted if real political unity is desired to be accomplished it must be through religion and religion alone; for religion and not politics is the vital principle of our life and unless the co-ordinating link in the spiritual background of humanity is discovered, the apparent contradictions in the different religious systems are sure to create bad blood in the land for time to come. In our fanatical zeal we generally forget that the various religious beliefs, like different streams, have their spontaneous rise in the perennial fount of one Eternal Truth, and notwithstanding the variety of courses they have ultimately found their synthetic fulfilment in the one vast ocean of universal brotherhood. And any religion that does not bear the impress of universalism is not a religion at all but a mockery of it. It is in the interest of humanity that we suggest the immediate inauguration of an annual session of a Congress of religions on a parallel line with that of the Indian National Congress to promote and cultivate better understanding among the various groups of religious thoughts and thereby minimise ignoble competition and corruption in the sacred name of religion. Not many years back a Parliament of religions was held in the famous city of Chicago in America, and everybody knows what an incalculable benefit has been done to humanity by an open-minded and cordial discussion of the fundamental principles of every form of religious beliefs. The establishment of such an institution in India on a permanent basis will be a step in the right

direction at this stage of spiritual awakening in and outside India. India, a land of all religions, would thus furnish the much-needed cohesive force to bring about a solidarity in the arena of international life.

The world has already grown weary of continued wars and bloodshed, and many a heart is panting for something substantial that would administer a lasting solace to the troubled hearts of mankind. Already there are unmistakable signs of a new spiritual awakening in the West. "National leaders", says Mr. Halcyon M. Thomas in *The Open Court*, "find security in religion, nor are they slow to voice forth their opinions. Brought suddenly to the responsibility of leadership in our great nation our President found strength for himself and gave confidence to his people when he said, 'He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep'." The same American writer quotes a passage from the editorial of a daily paper to adduce further proof of the deepening of spiritual life and religious awakening among the rank and file of life's hustlers: "We do not need more national development, we need more spiritual development. We do not need more intellectual power. We need more knowledge, we need more character. We do not need more of the things that are seen, we need more of the things that are not seen." In fact the spiritual instincts of the human race so long slumbering under the intoxication of self and power are now gradually re-asserting themselves. An annual session of the proposed Congress of religions would undoubtedly promote human understanding and eliminate from the field of national as well as international life those stumbling factors which have up till now hampered the process of national well-being and prevented the establishment of universal brotherhood in the cosmic life of humanity. The problems of India are indeed too many, and we sincerely hope that our national leaders would tackle these problems with an eye to the national interests of India as well as to the significant role she is to play in the betterment of human lot. May Lord bless the deliberations of the coming Congress with glorious success !

AN HISTORICAL COMPARISON

By K. C. R.

'History repeats itself' says the old proverb. Though this is a most terrible indictment of human character—the clear implication of the proverb being that men do not learn or gain anything by experience—it is true nevertheless. It is interesting to compare the recent history of India with the history of the Modern Age in Europe. Such a comparison is not only interesting in so far as it reveals the parallelism between the courses of events in the two great continents but it is also instructive in as much as it helps us to understand correctly the trend of contemporary history, and the defects and shortcomings of our own national life.

There have been three outstanding movements in the history of Modern Europe, namely the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Political Revolution. From one point of view the three movements can be regarded as different phases of the same process, namely the liberation of the human spirit from the thralldom of custom and superstition. The three movements are not dead; they are as active even now as ever. But, nevertheless, the sequence of the movements is very noteworthy. There could be no political revolution without the reformation, and the renaissance. It was only when the mind of Europe had been freed from the influence of scholasticism and of the Roman Church that it could visualise any picture of political democracy. Political Revolution (*i.e.*, the establishment of true political democracy) has been successful only to the extent to which renaissance and reformation have been real and thorough. In India we are crying to-day for a political revolution, *i.e.*, for the establishment of democratic Swaraj. This democratic Swaraj is something else than freedom from British rule. It may not come into existence even when the last Englishman has said his good-bye to the shores of India;—again, it may possibly be realised without the severance of British connection. A secure and sound basis for Swaraj will be laid only when each Indian realises the dignity of man, learns how to revolt against iniquitous customs and laws, learns how to listen and respond to the voice within him.

The Renaissance in India under British Rule began first of all in Bengal. If we are to associate the name of any individual with the beginning of the movement we must mention Raja Ram Mohun Roy who has rightly been called the father of modern India. The renaissance was essentially the result of the impact of Western ideas upon

the Indian mind. English education was introduced into Bengal in the early years of the last century. The East India Company did not make any grant for education before 1813. In that year the Court of Directors ordered that "a sum of not less than a lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart, and applied to the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the British territories of India." But ten long years elapsed before any money was actually spent. In 1823 a Committee of Public Instruction was appointed which immediately set out to spend the accumulated funds for the promotion of Oriental learning, and for the printing of old Arabic and Persian manuscripts. Thus during the first quarter of the last century, the Government did not take any active part in the propagation of Western learning or education among the natives of India. But the light from the West was coming in through other openings.

. The East India Company did not at first allow Christian Missionaries to enter British Indian territory and preach Christianity for fear of unnecessarily causing aversion in the minds of the native population against British rule. But the famous Missionaries Carey, Marshman, and Ward established a centre at Serampore which was then under the Danes, and from there began to preach Christianity, and teach English language and European culture. These Missionaries also played an important part in the development of Bengali prose language and literature.

By 1815 there were a few Bengalees who had learnt the English language and something of European culture by private, individual effort. The real impetus for Western education came from this small group. All the enthusiasts for English education formed themselves into an Association, and with the help, and patronage of foreigner friends such as David Hare, and Sir Hyde East, founded the Hindu College on the 20th June, 1817. In no time this Hindu College became the centre of the Renaissance movement in Bengal. The College was fortunate in securing the services of some very talented teachers. The most famous of them was the young Eurasian, Henry Vivian Derozio who exercised tremendous influence over his pupils, and was the intellectual father of some of the greatest sons of Bengal.

In 1823 when the Government was considering as to how best to utilise the money sanctioned by the Court of Directors for the spread of education, Raja Ram Mohun Roy sent his historic letter to Lord Amherst regarding the necessity of introducing Western education. But the fight between *Naya Roshni* (New Learning), and *Purani*

Roshni (Old Learning) was not decided till Lord Bentinck came out as the Governor-General, and Macaulay wrote his infamous diatribe against Sanskrit, and Arabic literatures. The party of New Learning won the battle, and the Government became their champion. In 1833 Lord Wellesley's policy of completely dissociating Indians from the administration was given up; it was declared that Indians would not be debarred by their race or religion from holding appointments under the Government. It now became necessary to manufacture Government officers, and Government's educational policy was bent to suit this particular purpose. About 1859 the whole educational system practically became officialised.

The outlook of Government's educational policy was considerably narrowed down; but the movement of renaissance once begun could not be stamped underground. Bengal produced a number of great men each one of whom became a torch-bearer of the New Light. It is neither possible nor necessary to recount their names here. The Renaissance produced a phenomenal development of vernacular literature, and furnished an impetus for various kinds of social reform. Outside Bengal there was no such dramatic, and romantic advent of the New Learning.—Western education was introduced late in the 19th century, and largely through Governmental agency.

The movement of Reformation began almost simultaneously as the Renaissance. The world is progressing at an accelerated motion and the events, which took about three centuries in Europe to materialise, were crowded on the stage of Indian history into a few decades. Early Renaissance in Bengal was characterised by paganism just like the renaissance in Italy. This paganism was most remarkable amongst the disciples of Derozio. A most typical product of this pagan renaissance was the great poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the Milton of Bengal. But side by side with the pagan school, there grew up another school which turned the new light on the problems of religion. The Brahmo Samaj movement may be likened to the Protestant Reformation. Raja Ram Mohun Roy was the pioneer of this movement. Amongst later leaders we find such great names as Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Keshub Chunder Sen, Pandit Shivanath Shastri. The movement spread to other provinces but did not meet with so much popularity or enthusiasm as in Bengal.

With the loss of solidarity amongst the Brahmos Hinduism began to revive its lost influence about the seventies of the last century. The Hindus began to put their own house in order, and save it from unmerited attacks from outside. The Arya Samaj, and the Ramakrishna Mission in more recent times are striking manifestations of this movement of counter-reformation,—though their ideals may

differ in important respects. In so far as both these organisations are trying to popularise their cause through educational activities, they resemble very closely the Society of Ignatius Loyola.

The political awakening in India has come rather late. Amongst earliest thinkers we may mention Ram Mohun Roy, Ramgopal Ghose, and Harishchandra Mookherjee. But organised political activity and agitation for Swaraj began only from 1885 when the Indian National Congress was founded.

Now let us turn to the points of difference between the movements in India and in Europe. In Europe the Renaissance displaced scholastic learning. It revived classical culture but not the classical language. Everywhere Latin was replaced by the local vernacular as the vehicle of thought and instruction with the result that the new learning easily filtered down to the masses. In India the teaching of Eastern philosophy and learning was replaced by the teaching of Western literature and sciences; but the vernaculars were not given their proper place as the media of instruction. The English language usurped the place of the vernaculars as the medium of instruction with the result that a gap was created between the English-educated few and the rest of the population. And this gulf is widening more and more with the progress of times. The light that was imported from the West with so much cost and effort has been confined to a handful of persons—it does not reach the masses at all. Even amongst the English-educated classes the awakening is very imperfect. The use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction prevents the boys and girls in the schools from gaining a clear and thorough grasp of subjects. Besides, an enormous quantity of labour and energy is wasted over learning the mysteries, and intricacies of the English language. To demolish the Chinese wall that stands between the English-educated middle class and the masses, the first thing that it is necessary to do is to use the vernaculars as the media of instruction in the schools.

Since the middle of the last century, education became too much officialised. Worldly gain took the place of acquisition of knowledge as the sole objective of education. The schools and colleges became factories for manufacturing clerks and officials. The bending of the educational policy to suit this particular need produced its inevitable consequences. The curricula had to be liberally diluted with untruths, half-truths, and useless truths in order that the students might grow up to be of the desired type and mentality. The spirit that inspired the first votaries of Western education—the spirit that sent Ram Mohun Roy to the mountains of Tibet in search of the truth of religion, the spirit that enabled Michael M. S. Dutt to disregard poverty and sickness and give his all in the service of Bengali language and literature

—the spirit that enabled Harish Chandra Mookherjee to work night and day in the cause of truth and in the service of the poor and the oppressed—in one word, the spirit that created, and inspired Young Bengal, and Young India, became very much tame and devitalised by the pressure of officialised education. In recent times, the universities have been given more power and freedom: a freer atmosphere has been created for the growth of knowledge, and culture. But what has been achieved is too little in comparison with what should have been achieved.

The Renaissance has not made equal progress amongst the Hindus and the Mussulmans. The disunion and lack of sympathy between the two communities, in so far as they are real and not merely the creation of self-seeking politicians must be regarded as due to the difference in the degree of modernisation of the two communities. The Indian Mussulmans were slow to take to Western education. The sudden change from the position of rulers to that of the ruled was a severe blow to their self-respect—they could not take kindly to English education. The community was spoonfed with Western education in small doses. In doing so the rulers took good care to alienate them from the Hindus as far as practicable and put a stop to the process of synthesis which had for a very long time been going on between the Hindu and Islamic cultures. Sectarian and denominational institutions were founded and patronised by Government. One English statesman wrote that the imparting of education “in the Vernacular of Bengal, a language which the educated Mohammedans despise, and by means of Hindu teachers whom the whole Mohammedan community hates” must never be countenanced by Government. Nay, the education of Mohammedans must not be secularised. Education must be “religious”, and Muslim boys must receive it through the medium of Urdu from mediaeval priests. Even as regards higher education it was suggested that there should be separate colleges for Mohammedans. “The actual instruction might for the present be conducted by Mohammedan teachers as at present, but each college should have a resident European Principal acquainted with Arabic and capable both of supervising his subordinates, and of enforcing self-respect.” (The Indian Mussulmans—by Sir William Hunter, 1871). These suggestions have been worked out with too much faithfulness. The results are too patent, and too sad to bear repetition here.

Is it possible to cure the defects in our present educational system, and make it more pervasive, and extensive? On the answer to this question depends India's future. Social, political, and economic problems can be solved only when the renaissance is more perfect, and effective. India is at present in a vicious circle. Only education can

save it from sinking deeper and deeper in the morass of poverty, degradation, and squalor. It is not possible to skip over a stage in history. There is a very important stage in the history of modern Europe known as 'enlightened despotism'. It is this process of enlightened despotism which considerably accelerated the process of modernisation in many countries. This task must be undertaken either by a single despot or by a minority group of influential men. In Germany, Russia, Austria, and France, Frederick, Peter, Joseph, and Napoleon did this work in their own times. Kamal Pasha, and King Amanullah are to-day doing the same work in Turkey, and Afghanistan. In England, on the contrary, the middle class Parliament undertook the task of "educating its masters". In India the task of uplifting the mass devolves in a special sense upon the minority group of educated Indians. If they do not put their shoulder to the yoke while there is yet time, they will have sooner or later to wend the way the Russian aristocracy of the Czarist regime have gone.

HINDUISM—ITS RATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC BASIS*

By Swami Yatiswarananda

A new awakening has come over the Hindu society, and everywhere we are pleased to witness the stirrings of a new life, the signs of a new consciousness, that are becoming more and more marked with the efflux of time. Indeed we are passing through a period of transition, and our march towards the goal should be intelligent and well-directed, fully in keeping with the ideals and traditions of our great and ancient religion. Hence, it is all the more incumbent on our part to form a true conception of Hinduism, its essential features and principles, and this we should do not only for our own guidance but also for the illumination of others.

We Hindus have unfortunately become nowadays like the proverbial frog of the well. Forgetting the universal aspect of our great religion, most of us think of it only in terms of the particular country, province, sect or community to which we may happen to belong. But Hinduism refuses to be thus circumscribed. In spite of the many catastrophes through which it has been passing for the last so many centuries, it is still a dynamic religion the sphere of the influence of which is expanding to no small extent even in our present times. And

* Substance of a lecture delivered in the Ramakrishna Mission, Vaidyeshwara Vidyalyaya Hall, Jaffna, Ceylon.

in this expansion, the part played by Swami Vivekananda—the greatest Hindu missionary of the age—is undoubtedly the greatest. For it was the Swami who not only brought a new consciousness to the Hindus in India and abroad, but also awakened the interest and admiration of countless Western men and women for the eternal principles of Hinduism, that also form the very rationale of all other religions.

Hinduism is a universal religion. It is not a kingdom but an empire, not a particular system but a confederation of systems, not a single faith but a commonwealth of faiths. It is a synthetic religion that includes the worship of Shiva, Vishnu, Sakti, Rama, Krishna and other gods and goddesses, prophets and incarnations in their personal and universal aspects, and links them all together by the all-embracing ideals of the Vedanta as proclaimed by the ancient as well as the modern saints and sages, who, as Sri Ramakrishna has very aptly put it, cry, like jackals, to the one and the same tune. Indeed, Hinduism can be likened to a mighty stream that has been flowing since the very dawn of human civilisation, with its innumerable branches and tributaries, both in India and elsewhere towards God—the Ocean of existence called by various names by diverse peoples in different parts of the world.

Hinduism does not owe its origin to any single individual. It may be said to be the product of the spiritual genius of the entire Hindu race. It is certainly a revealed religion, but revealed not to a particular person or set of persons, but to innumerable prophets, saints and sages. It is based not on personality but on the Divine Principle that is embodied more or less in all the great spiritual men and women of the world. In this respect Hinduism differs widely from other religions. For, Buddhism without Buddha is unthinkable; Christianity without Christ falls to the ground; Mohammedanism without Mohammed loses its meaning. But such is not the case with Hinduism, which founded as it is on the bedrock of Eternal Verity, has yet place for any number of personalities, prophets and teachers. Hinduism does not, therefore, believe with Christianity in the theory of “the only begotten Son of God,” nor with Mohammedanism in “the Messenger with final and complete revolution”. It holds, on the other hand, that, as the human society is a living and evolving organism and needs readjustments with the change of time and circumstances, there must flourish newer and newer prophets who as declared in the Bhagavad Gita, are embodiments of the One Divine Being, and appear in different ages for the preservation of good and destruction of evil, in short, for the establishment of righteousness on earth.

Like the Hindu religion, its manifold sects and denominations also do not usually derive their names from any prophet or saint, as the terms Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Saktaism and others clearly indicate. These are named after the deities they worship,—deities which are in fact different aspects of the one God-head. Besides, Hinduism believes that the different religions of the world are the diverse expressions of the One Great Religion, and as such they are like rivers flowing towards the ocean, different paths leading to the same God—the Goal of all religions,—whose glory has been sung by various teachers and sages in different times, countries and languages. Hence, it does not, like some of the “universal” religions, promise eternal heaven to its votaries, and condemn the followers of all other “pagan” religions to eternal hell. It cannot believe that God can ever be like an old-world tribal chief who in his terrible jealousy and hatred is prepared to punish severely if not to destroy completely, all who do not accept him in a particular form. And very truly does the Lord give expression to the Universalism of the Hindu religion when he says in the Bhagavad Gita,—“In whatever way men worship me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires. It is my path that men tread in all ways.”

Unlike the Semetic religions, Hinduism very sympathetically takes into consideration the mental evolution of the worshipper in prescribing for him the form of worship. It, therefore, recognises the necessity of the use of idols or material symbols as well as of sound symbols in the case of those who cannot follow the mental forms of worship and practise the higher courses of concentration and meditation. Hinduism is thus immensely practical, and as such it holds that every one of the many courses of spiritual culture, beginning with the so-called image-worship and ending with the intuitive experience of the One without a second, has its legitimate place in religious life. And according to it religion does not consist in idle talks or in mere observance of forms; it is being and becoming. The progress made by an individual is to be judged by his own experiences, and not by his professions or intellectual assents or dissents. A sincere “idolator” is, therefore, a better man than an hypocritical “unitarian”, although certainly the former should try to outgrow the crudities of his religious conception, and raise himself to the higher planes of thoughts and experience. All this points to the all-comprehensive nature of Hinduism which more than any other religion, fulfils the conditions of Religion Universal. And it was because of this reason that peoples of all stages of evolution were admitted into the pale of the Hindu society and made to follow their own laws of growth and proceed step by step to the higher rungs of the ladder of culture.

This is borne out by the very name "Hindu" which has an interesting history of its own. The word is derived from the term Sindhu the Aryan name for the river which the ancient Persians distorted into Hindu, and the ancient Greeks into Indos. The Persians also used to call the people living in the country beyond the mighty river by the name Hindu. The term was also used by the Mohammedan conquerors of India, and was in course of time taken up by the people themselves. But gradually the meaning of the word underwent a change. Instead of standing for the entire Indian people, it has now come to mean only the followers of the ancient religion of India, who however, form more than two-thirds of the entire population of the country.

Hindu society is a veritable ethnological museum containing innumerable ethnic groups. The so-called Aryan, the Dravidian, the Kolarian, the Mongolian,—people of all varieties of colour, physiognomy, language, manners and customs—all have been fused together into one organic whole. A common motherland that is also the holy land, common prophets and saints, common scriptures, ideals and aspirations—these and other common factors cement together the apparently incompatible elements. As far as our historical knowledge goes, India has been the native country of the ancient Aryans and non-Aryans alike. Whatever may be the pet theories of a class of Orientalists regarding the original home of the Indo-Aryans, the fathers of the Vedic civilisation lived and died on the very soil of India,—in the land watered by the seven holy rivers including the Indus. Similarly, the Dravidian and other races lived in the same country, although in its different parts. But as time went on all the diverse ethnological groups were brought together. And more than any political conquest, it was the cultural penetration and fusion that achieved this remarkable union. And so very potent has been the power of the Hindu culture that it has been able to assimilate beyond recognition all the various indigenous races as well as the hosts of outlanders who invaded the country from time to time until the Mohammedan rule. To the vast mass of humanity known as the Hindu society containing innumerable communities in different stages of evolution and culture, the Hindu religion presents the same principle, but not one prophet but many prophets, not a particular ethical code and religious practice but many such codes and practices which, being different steps to the highest realisation, are calculated to suit the different types of aspirants and help them in their onward march towards perfection.

Like the Hindu people, the Hindu religion also is synthetic. The various streams of thought originally limited to particular parts of

the country met in course of time, and Mother India became the holy confluence of diverse cultures with the same ultimate ideal in view,—a phenomenon the like of which the world has never seen in the long history of mankind. It is wrong to call Hinduism by the name of Brahminism as some scholars are apt to do. The prophets and sages of ancient India were Brahmins and “non-Brahmins” alike. Rama and Krishna—the greatest of the Hindu incarnations were not Brahmins but Kshatriyas to which group also belonged many of the sages of Vedic India. Some of the Puranic sages were even persons of questionable parentage, but birth never stood in the way of their being honoured as saints even by the highest born in the land. The later saints of Hinduism like the previous ones, came from all castes and classes, including even the so-called “depressed” ones, and helped the current of religion to flow with greater force and intensity than before.

Hinduism is not a non-proselytising religion, as it is wrongly supposed to be. We have already seen that its all-absorbing spirit made it assimilate many an aboriginal community, originally outside its bounds, and also many an outlandish tribe that came to settle in the land. Not only this, but it also spread its irresistible influence on foreign tribes in other lands that came to form part and parcel of the “Greater India”—a name by which all countries that accepted the Hindu culture as their own were collectively called. And this process of Hinduisation is going on in modern times in India and in the West where many thoughtful men and women are being drawn towards the eternal religion of India, and are finding solace in its universal ideals and principles. Hinduism is not a dead but a dynamic religion possessing an inexhaustible vitality all its own.

Hinduism does not know of any conflict between religion, philosophy and science as is the case with some of the other religions. In it religion and philosophy have been practically synonymous, the one supplying the spiritual and the other the rational basis of life and thought. The Hindu philosophers were primarily men of Divine realisation, and thus they could build up grand systems of thought on the bedrock of spiritual experience. And these systems, called Darshanas, are literally the means of bringing about the vision of the Truth and they include, besides religion and philosophy, also the different branches of positive sciences. The atomic theory, the concepts of logic, the ideas of evolution, the problems of psychology and systems of metaphysics—these and other branches of knowledge were given their legitimate places in these Darshanas. Besides, all the systems also speak of the cosmological theories. They hold that creation does not mean the coming into being of the world out of nothing, but implies the evolution of the cosmos out of the chaos to which the former

resolves at the time of dissolution. This process of evolution and involution is going on eternally,—an old Hindu idea that finds its echo in the theory of the modern evolutionists of the West. Hinduism thus believes in the indestructibility of matter as well as in the conservation of energy that acts on matter,—conceptions that have revolutionised modern science and thought. Rightly has Sir Brajendra Nath Seal pointed out in his "Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus" that it was on the empirical basis of the positive sciences that the speculative superstructure of Hindu philosophy was securely founded, and this method was undoubtedly as scientific as it was rational.

Not only in its general traits but also in its essentials, Hinduism is universal in its outlook. The conception of the Atman or the spiritual entity existing in all beings, human and non-human ; the law of Karma that makes each man responsible for his own doing ; the belief in re-incarnation that gives a person infinite scope and opportunity for evolution ; the belief in God who is both immanent and transcendent ; the ideal of Moksha or salvation through Self-realisation that is the birth-right of every individual ;—these and other grand conceptions form the essentials of the Hindu faith. Indeed the doctrine of the potential divinity of man, the ideal of human unity through the realisation of the One Being, and the spirit of toleration and universalism—these are the dominating notes in Hinduism. And these should be realised by us all Hindus in order to break down the encrustations of dead forms, customs that threaten to kill in us the very soul of religion. May these universal ideas, and ideals which are appealing both to the head and the heart, widen the outlook of us all—the followers of Hinduism, nay, the outlook of the followers of all other religions also, and thereby bring mankind nearer and nearer to God—in whom lies eternal peace and blessedness.

THE RELATION BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND THE UPANISHADS

(Continued from the November issue)

By Prof. A. K. Sharma

VII.

Buddha was a spiritual democrat. He did not contemplate the exclusion of any from discipleship. Nirvana should be the privilege of all, the caste Jew as well as the outcaste Gentile, man as well as woman. He was not particular about the renunciation of the

world on the part of the seekers, though he retained it as an essential condition for admission into the higher fellowship of the Sangha. Nor did he insist that they should have fulfilled the round of duties prescribed by the Brahmanical canons, for to insist on this would amount to telling them that they could not enter into the path till they were fifty or sixty years of age ; moreover, there was no sense in requiring them to be good already, when his plan was to transform their lives. Good conduct would come as a state in realisation rather than as a condition for admission. The doors were, therefore, thrown wide open ; no questions were asked ; and whosoever came was admitted.

However, it was in the treatment of the methods that Buddha's teaching came out most distinctly as a programme of life. The methods, as they stood in the Upanishads, were deficient on the practical side : they presupposed a high degree of spirituality in the disciples, and also a peculiarly secluded atmosphere ; worse still they were abstract and sketchy, and could be used only in the immediate presence of a teacher ; and the worst was that they were intended to be taken together, and applied in a single sitting, to bring about the highest spiritual condition, as it were, in one sweep. How could Buddha accept them as they were ? His disciples were a heterogeneous lot,—carpenters, weavers, husbandmen, and so on. Most of them had to begin spiritual life at the bottom. They did not have the quietness of a secluded life, or the immediate guidance of a teacher. They would make a mess of the whole affair, unless they were told in concrete terms what exactly they had to achieve. Further, their lungs were not powerful enough to breathe the rarified atmosphere of dizzy heights before being accustomed to lower altitudes. In other words, they needed a programme of life, spread out in time and divided into manageable stages, so that they could live it out step by step, each step leading to the next higher, gradually, naturally, and with ease. In the light of these considerations Buddha applied the old methods in an original way, without in the least impairing their integrity.

Buddhaghosha's Visuddhimagga, a compendium of orthodox beliefs, gives an exposition of this programme under two heads, *Sila* and *Samadhi*. The former is a preliminary discipline, and it occupies one stage ; while the latter forms the main part of the programme, and it is worked out in four stages. In the Upanishads empirical reality is conceived progressively as physical, as organic, as mental, and as conscious ; accordingly spiritual life consists in a successive criticism and refinement of these conceptions. On the other hand, Buddha recognised that corresponding to these conceptions there are different kinds of lives ; in his view, therefore, the path which leads

to Nirvana is the path of reformation. At every stage of it one kind of life is attended to, and by means of a particular method, it is overcome and the next higher life brought into being. This is the programme. In the first stage, self-control keeps the individual on the plane of ordinary morality ; in the second, faith weans him out of the desire for material goods ; in the third, he practises breath control, and ceases to have any relish for mere living as such ; in the fourth, he subdues the passions and lives a life of love ; and in the last, concentration raises him even above consciousness, and he realises his oneness with the universe. It is in this manner that the standpoints of materialism, of realism, of idealism, and of the intellect itself are successively transcended, and an ascending scale of life built up.

Sila is conduct. It includes overt action as well as the disposition from which action issues. To check the impulses, that is to say, to exercise some control over the senses, to develop a certain amount of indifference to unpleasant situations, to cultivate a little of patience, and to be occasionally mindful of the other side of the question : these would appear to be, in Buddha's view, the essential means by which life is maintained at the moral level. Through *Sila* the individual controls and organises the mind, and thus keeps himself in the path of rectitude.

Disciplined in this way he enters into a life of faith. Faith leads to meditation. As he practises it from day to day he feels the presence of Buddha more and more, first as an idea, next as an influence, and then as a living reality. Occasionally he sees a vision ; gradually it becomes more and more vivid ; and every time it brings the same figure clothed in the same rags and holding the same beggar's bowl. The vision haunts, and our inquirer is stirred with questionings : why did the prince exchange a kingdom for beggar's bowl ? Why did he discard royal robes and put on rags ? Does he hunger and thirst as other men do ?

Thinking on these things he grows into them ; the message of poverty has gone home ; and Buddha has conquered. The outlook of the disciple changes, and life acquires a new significance. Pleasure palls, and he develops an aversion to his old life. Food, drink, and worldly possessions : how vulgar and nauseating they are ! Yet how much of energy is spent in their pursuits ; what competition, worry and travail ! How sad to think that the spirit is being immolated daily at their altars ! How humiliating to contemplate that man forgets the high destiny to which he is called, and transforms himself into an animal to wallow in filth and mire ! And what of the dear thing called his body ? A putrid mass of flesh and bones, so frail that it needs constant repair, and so perishable that nothing can save it from

decay and dissolution ? Yet what a great value is attached to it, as if it were an idol cast for eternity ! Not for him this life ; henceforth he would live as if he has no body ; in competition he would be generous ; and what he accumulated he would give away.

This aversion is not enough. Freud notwithstanding, of all the instincts the strongest is the instinct to live. It is the goddess of strife incarnate in the individual, it is the principle of dehumanisation in man, and it is the root of struggles. So long as it is not kept well under control, not completely eradicated, spiritual life is not possible. Therefore the seeker begins to practise breath-control. Breath is life, at least symptomatic of it, and the control of it is the control of life itself. When he has advanced far enough in this, he gets a queer experience : he can bring about all symptoms of death and yet be alive. Thus he discovers that real life, though veneered by physical vitality, is something more subtle and elusive.

He has still a far way to go. The virtue that he has acquired is of a parochial sort. It is confined within definite geographical limits, and is governed by considerations of race, nationality and creed. Thus confined it remains crippled and defective. In the eyes of the world, he is a good man, but real goodness he has not attained. After all, the world's view of these things is superficial. Love the members of your family ; be a friendly neighbour ; discharge your civic duties, do not violate conventional rules ; for the rest, your morality may go holidaying ; and, to be sure, the world will credit you with enough goodness. To be good, in the highest sense of the term, means to extend the range of obligations everywhere, unconditionally, without limits, without stint. This is attained by lifting the veil that blinds the view, by pulling down all partition walls, and by visioning an ideal immeasurably great. Love friends and foes alike ; have compassion for even those who do not seem to deserve it, namely, the powerful and the rich ; work loyally and sincerely for the happiness of all ; give thine own dear self a seat in a back row ; these are the commandments of Buddha's universal spirituality.

By the time the seeker gets to the final stage, he has attained a high degree of spirituality. But the self is still there, and in contact with it the world is still another, separate and distinctive. It may be kept in the background, its activities suspended, but it is there. As long as it is allowed to remain separate there is the possibility of mischief. To do away with its separateness is to transcend consciousness itself, and this is achieved by the method of concentration and of higher meditation. The methods used earlier are applied again, and it is only after they have brought about mental collectedness

that concentration has to enter. Any object will serve to focus attention. In the Upanishads, it is the syllable *Aum*; here it is a tiny ball of earth. As the process advances, the concrete object is removed and attention is directed to the representation of perfect spiritual life,—universal love, universal good-will, universal pity, absolute disinterestedness. It is not without significance that this meditation is called *Brahma-Vihara*, i.e., the temple of Brahman. The mind, in the ordinary sense of the term, becomes absorbed in it; the distinction between the ego and the non-ego vanishes, and the highest degree of life is attained. The human spirit has become one with the universe; it is at-one-ment, Nirvana.

VIII.

Apart from the goal and the methods by which it is attained, even the organisation and the regulation of religious life in Buddhism are based on the life and teaching advocated in the Upanishads. The *Vihara* is a convenient edition of the hermitage; and the *Sangha*, i.e., the brotherhood of monks, is a practical version of the fellowship of the *sages* in the forest. The renunciation of the world and the three vows required of a candidate for ordination, are, if at all, but slight variants of the renunciation and the vows demanded of a man before he takes to the life of an ascetic. The rules which Buddha established for the monks and nuns seem to be but reproductions of the rules laid down in the Upanishads for the conduct of ascetics. "Absolute continence; no private property: a very strict regime which.....seems very favourable for moral mortification while avoiding any corporeal pain; the life of a wandering mendicant during the dry season and during rains, a cenobitic life with all the mutual concessions and admonitions this life implies. On the whole an aristocratic form of asceticism, very much resembling the asceticism of the Brahmins."

IX.

The two teachings agree in such a fundamental matter as the conception of reality. Everything is Brahman; Brahman is Soul; these two propositions sum up the view of the Upanishads. It is not Idealism. Idealism makes no distinction in kind between reality and appearance; it explains everything in terms of consciousness; and in it there is always the distinction between the knowing subject and the object known. Even when some form of Idealism, like that of Kant, distinguishes soul from consciousness, it is not treated as a foundational concept, and it therefore remains inoperative for purposes of explanation: and when reality as such is also posited in contradiction from phenomenon, it is shelved back into the region of the unknown. In the Upanishads, on the contrary, there is a fundamental

distinction between reality and phenomenon; the latter is explained in terms of consciousness and is condemned as an illusion, while the former is described in terms of a superconscious entity called Soul; and, what is more important, no dualism of any kind is tolerated, no opposition between the ego and the non-ego, the knower and the known. Reality is one, and there is no second real; it is beyond limits, beyond distinctions, beyond consciousness; it is nothing in particular, but it is the basis of everything that exists; as the cosmic principle, it is called Brahman, and, as the psychic principle, Atman.

Buddha too held this view. That he did not give any formal exposition of root-conceptions, is obvious; that he adopted the human point of view necessary in practical life, is admitted; that he attended mainly to reality as disclosed in selflessness, is also undisputed. Nevertheless there are enough utterances of his which bring out his conceptions most clearly. All things are one in essence, as pots and pitchers are in essence clay, and they progress towards one goal, namely, Nirvana. To attain Nirvana is to know that all things are one, and then to live accordingly. This is what Buddha told Kassapa. What is the nature of the real? This question was put by one of the followers of General Simha to Buddha himself; and the answer was that everything is spiritual, even what is perceived by the senses. However, it was Aswaghosha, a later Buddhist philosopher, who systematised the master's views in what has come to be called by the infelicitous name of the doctrine of Thatness. "All things in their fundamental nature are not nameable or explicable. They cannot be adequately expressed in any form of language. They possess absolute sameness.....They are nothing but one soul—Thatness. This "Thatness" has no attribute.....it is the pure soul that manifests itself as eternal, permanent, immutable."

And what of the phenomenon? In the view of the Upanishads all forms of empirical reality are labelled by one epithet and condemned as Maya, illusion. To talk of change and causality, of plurality and distinctions, is to talk of something which does not really exist. Thus the objective world, the individual self, and even the personality of God, are illusions which man cherishes in vain. Maya has various aspects. Objectively, it is illusion; in respect of knowledge, it is Avidya or nescience; and from the point of view of origins, it is Prakriti or power inherent in Brahman. Very well; but what is the constitution of the empirical world? How account for this riot of forms? Even as illusion the world appears to possess an order. Further, common sense would prodilect in favour of life that it sees. Why should it be asked to give it up? What is wrong with it? These are questions which will naturally occur to every one. The Upanishads do not seem to

attach importance to these questions ; at any rate, in comparison with the attention paid on the positive side of the teaching, the explanation of phenomena seems to be practically neglected. It was centuries later that Gaudapada handled the problem in the interest of orthodox Vedanta ; but he was much influenced by Buddhism, if he was not actually a Buddhist. It was Buddha who made the first attempt in the direction of an explanation ; and his teaching in this respect forms a valuable supplement to the teaching contained in the Upanishads.

In his view also, empirical life has the status of only a dream. Somewhere and somehow nescience supervened and the process started. The dream pictures, however, maintain an order of succession. It is to explain this order that Buddha correlated the ideas scattered in the Upanishads and fused them into a doctrine of the evolution of forms, *i.e.*, a process of successive differentiation. A vague activity ; the emergence of consciousness, with its dualism of subject and object ; thereafter the crystallising of mental and material forms ; the various fields of sensation ; sense-feeling ; hedonic feeling ; the association of this with objects ; the desire for them ; the conservation of this desire in the organism, giving it a particular inclination ; rebirth, decay and death. Thus the self and the world have evolved together as two correlative terms. After they have come into being they sustain each other ; the mind thinks as the world is, and the world behaves as the mind thinks. This dependence was explained later, by Aswaghosha and Asanga, in the manner of idealism.

Why not accept the world as it is ? Commonsense agrees with James in thinking that life as we see it is worth living. Buddha dissents. He seems to think that the question involves larger issues. Eternal values are at stake, and the very reality of higher life is challenged. How can phenomenon satisfy the demands of reason ? It is an aggregate of parts, and what is aggregated may also be dissolved. It is transient—one form now, and another the next moment. It has no identity, for it is ever shifting. After all a thing is what it does ; and if its effects are ever changing, there is no way of describing it in terms of any predicate. It may even be that it involves contradictory predications. Further, it is a world of clashing individualities. How can it be the home of universal love ? It is full of evil and sorrow. How can it be the expression of bliss ? All that is highest and the best in man demands that it should be treated as only mimic reality.

This is not pessimism. Pessimism is made of weaker stuff. Even complacent optimists are not satisfied with the world as it is. They would have us believe that, in spite of much that is ugly, evil, and

irrational, the world is sound at heart. In this way their optimism is allied to a deeper view of things. It is so with Buddha. Life as it really is, not as it merely appears, is worth living. It alone answers to our highest ideals. It is in Buddhism, in the Upanishads, and also in Christianity, if by this is meant the teaching of Jesus, and in no other religion or system of philosophy, that the conception of the fundamental reality of the universe is in perfect accord with the conception of the highest ideal of man.

Buddhism has been woefully misunderstood. It is a system of rationalism, says one ; no, it is a system of morality, says another ; a third joins issue and calls it a system of religion ; how can it be so, since it is atheistic ? asks a fourth. "An inadequate knowledge of Indian mysticism...is responsible for the confusion that is implied in such a view," explains Professor Poussin.

"The Upanishads are to my mind the germs of Buddhism," declared Max Muller, "while Buddhism is in many respects the doctrine of the Upanishads carried out to its last consequences. In doctrine the highest goal of the Vedanta and the knowledge of the true self is no more than the Buddhist Samyaksambodhi, in practice the Sanuyasin is the Bhikshu, the friar, only emancipated alike from the tedious discipline of the Brahminic student, the duties of the Brahminic householder, and the yoke of useless penances imposed upon the Brahminic dweller in the forest...In fact there is no break between the India of the Veda and the India of the Tripitaka, but there is an historical continuity between the two, and the connecting link between the extremes that seem widely separated must be sought in the Upanishads.

When the two are examined it would become more and more evident that the Upanishads taught a theory of life and Buddha a corresponding programme.—*Extracted from "The Monist," Chicago, U. S. A.*

(Concluded)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

An English Translation of Saint Meikanda Deva Nayanar's Siva Jnana Botham : by Nova money David Nadar, B. A., B. L., Retired Deputy Collector, Arcot House, Puthur, Trichinopoly ; printed at the Jananukoola Press, Trichinopoly. Price Rs. 2.

Siva Jnana Botham is purely a philosophical work which deals with the nature of God, man and the universe and with the relation existing between them. The doctrines enunciated in this book represent one of the dualistic schools of philosophers that can claim a large following in India. Man through the grace of God attains Jnana which is revealed to him by God or Brahman when he through good actions and Tapasya performed in many previous births has acquired the necessary qualification for it. The translator of this precious Tamil work which expounds the whole philosophy in a nutshell consisting as it does of only 12 Sutras or Aphorisms has placed especially those students of philosophy who are ignorant of the Tamil language under a deep debt of obligation by making the book accessible to them and enabling others to make a correct study of Vedanta Siddhanta Sastras. If the author as his name signifies is a Christian by birth the interest he has evinced by the study of the Hindu Philosophy which emphasises previous births is laudable, and it is hoped that other Indian Christians will follow in his wake and turn to better account the Hindu culture that is imbedded in their blood. The English translation is faithful and has been made lucid by the addition of suitable notes and quotations.

Economics of Khaddar : by Richard B. Gregg;
published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras, S.E. Rs. 1-8.

At a time when the name of Khaddar stands in the forefront of the scheme for national reconstruction, the appearance of this book will be considered as valuable and opportune by all advocates of Khaddar movement. The value of the book is enhanced not only by its deep analysis, its exhaustiveness, and its scientific spirit, but also by its authoritative nature in as much as it comes from the pen of a person who has made a close study of Khaddar movement and has a long practical experience in mill industry. The main purport of the book is that the Khaddar movement is neither unscientific nor un-economic as it is generally supposed to be by persons trained in Western economic systems. By elaborate arguments he shows that the Charka, worked by man power, is the most effective and at the same

time the most simple machine for utilising solar power from the current sources of supply instead of from the stored up sources of coal and petroleum. Such a scheme is neither reactionary nor fantastic, but in accordance with the views of the most advanced industrialists like Mr. Henry Ford. The economic utility of hand-spinning as a byo-industry to an agricultural country like India, where the rural population is practically kept in unemployment and idleness for six months that form the dull season in agriculture every year, is perhaps the strongest argument in favour of the Khaddar movement. As regards the higher price of Khaddar in comparison with mill-made cloth, the author says first of all that as spinning can be practised like cooking in every house for private use, it need not necessarily enter into competition with mill-yarn. Even if such competition exists, improvement in Charka, which is in no way an impossibility, can increase its productive capacity and thus safeguard its position. But what is more than this, the author points out a number of possible economies in Khaddar industry which, if effected by proper organisation and training of the farmer, are likely to bring the price of Khaddar lower than that of mill cloth. The book is on the whole original and well-reasoned, and is absolutely free from any play of sentiment.

Glimpses: by T. L. Vaswani ; published by "Theosophical Publishing House", Adyar, Madras. Price annas 8.

This little book embodies the thoughts which the author says he jotted down while he was on his sick bed. These thoughts have been grouped under attractive headings and reveal the depth of his religious feelings and his great solicitude for his mother country. To the English-educated young men of India who have become victims to the Occidental civilization and to the Westerner's views of life the thoughtful utterances appearing under the heading "Law of Humanity" are specially recommended as indicating the spirit with which arts and sciences should be studied. Professor T. L. Vaswani is at his best when he speaks of God-consciousness and of the methods to attain it. Man's ideal must be to realize his Self, his Atman by which terms is meant the Personal God, the Cosmic life. This realization is possible only by the practice,—the daily practice of complete dependence upon Divinity, the Personal God and not by any amount of intellectualism. This is the main theme of the book under review. The book on the whole is inspiring and many a soul thirsting for God-consciousness will find useful instructions and solace in it.

A Synthesis of The Bagavad Gita : by the Editors of the Shrine of Wisdom ; published in London. Price 3/- net.

It is indeed gratifying to see that the Editors of The Shrine of Wisdom have published "A Synthesis of the Bhagavad Gita" which, to

use their own words, "ranks amongst the world's most precious scriptures". The Bhagavad Gita contains eighteen Chapters, the first six of which deal with the nature of the Soul or the Self of man, the rest six are devoted to the exposition of the Paramatman or the All-self and the last six describe the nature of the union between the two. The paths laid down for attaining this union have been declared to be mainly three—*viz.*, Bhakti, Karma and Gnana according as the temperament of the aspirant may be emotional, volitional or intellectual. And to these the Editors have thought fit to add two more, *viz.*, Dharmamarga and Rajamarga. The necessity for this addition is explained by them in their introduction to the book as follows:—

"But although the three paths are thus distinguished it is impossible to progress far on any one of them without combining, to some extent, the activities of the other two, since the Soul, although possessing many faculties, is and acts as a unity. Hence there are two other paths or main directions in which the Soul's energies may be directed and in which all the three faculties combine." They have accordingly waded through the whole of the Gita, collected and grouped the Slokas that may be fitly shown under one or other of these five paths. One reading this valuable Synthesis will not be led into the labyrinth of metaphysical subtleties but instead will get a clear insight into the nature of the Self, of the All-self and of the means for uniting the former with the latter. It should be said to the credit of the Editors that the few comments which they have appended under certain Slokas not only reveal their correct and clear grasp of the teachings of the Gita but are calculated to save many a reader from being lost in the quagmire of apparent contradictions, conundrums and doubts. We strongly recommend this Synthesis of the Bhagavad Gita to all lovers of Religion and especially to the reading public of the West who are yet to realize the value of the Bhagavad Gita—a work which when properly understood will be found to be universal in its appeal, "unexcelled in its beauty, its tenderness and its depth".

NEWS AND REPORTS

The whole country to-day mourns the lamentable death of Lala Lajpat Roy—the Lion of the Punjab. He passed away at 7-30 A.M., on Sunday, the 17th November, 1928 at the age of 63. India has lost in him a patriotic soul nerved to lion's courage and dedicated at the altar of the mother-land for the evolution of her destiny. A Journalist, an educationist, a social reformer and a heroic political fighter, Lala Lajpat Roy stood as a tower of strength and inspiration

to his countrymen, and the void created by his loss in the arena of Indian national life can hardly be filled up for many years to come. He was a practical idealist; and it is indeed a matter of profound sorrow that he has been snatched away from our midst by the icy hand of death at a time when his dreams and cherished ideals were steadily shaping themselves and materialising into historic landmarks in the grand process of our national well-being. We offer our heart felt condolence to his bereaved family and relations and pray that his soul that bled and suffered for the soil of India may attain eternal rest in the bosom of the Lord in Heaven.

A SHORT REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FROM JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER 1928

The Report shows that at present there are 213 monastic and 281 lay members of the Mission in the register, and the number of the affiliated branch-centres in different parts of India including the one recently started at Singapore is twenty six.

The most pressing and urgent work in the hands of the Mission today is the famine relief work started in Bankura and Balurghat in May and September respectively. Till now 2264 Mds. of rice have been distributed to 6475 recipients belonging to 265 villages. The sum of Rs. 22,833/-, has been received for the work, but the expenditure on this account amounts to Rs. 23,991/-. The deficit has been advanced from the Provident Relief Fund of the Mission at present and there is a promise of Rs. 800/-, from one Guzerati gentleman. Twenty-two workers were sent to the field; nine of them have come back of whom six have been attacked with fever. The work shall still be continued up to the second week of November.

From the Poor Fund of the Belur Math the sum of Rs. 897/6- has been spent to help 47 monthly recipients, and 25 needy persons have been temporarily helped. The demand being very great on this fund, immediate steps should be taken to strengthen it.

On account of the gradual increase of patients the present dispensary building in the Belur Math needs an extension very badly. A kind friend has donated Rs. 2,000/-, to form a nucleus for the Building Fund, and it has been proposed to construct a new building on the plot of land just opposite the present dispensary.¹

The progress of the Industrial School at the Belur Math had been so long hindered for want of funds. It is a matter of great pleasure to announce that the Government has promised a monthly aid of Rs. 100/-, and granted Rs. 350/-, as an equipment-grant. Arrangements are being made to equip the school with a suitable staff of teachers.

The Home of Service in Benares has acquired a plot of land for the extension of the ward for women with a grant of Rs. 25,000/-, from the Government on condition that the authorities of the Home shall raise an equal sum from the public.

The Sevashrama in Allahabad has completed the new indoor ward. The new ward in Brindaban is also completed. The foundation of a ward for women in Rangoon Sevashrama has been laid by His Excellency the Governor of Burma.

His Excellency Sir Robert A. Stanley, K.C.M.G., the Governor of Ceylon was pleased to open a newly constructed building of the R. K. Mission Hindu School at Trincomalie on the 5th July. Besides, several schools have been established in Ceylon, through the efforts of Swamis Vipulananda and Avinashananda, who are trying to meet the educational needs of the islands. An attempt is being made to have the Mission registered in Ceylon by an ordinance passed by the Legislature of the Government of Ceylon.

With contribution from Swami Madhavananda the head of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco, U.S.A., a new fund has been started here for the spread of primary education in backward villages. Four schools have already been started at Mankhanda in 24 Pergs, Banmukha in Bankura, Beldah in Midnapur, and Charipur in Sylhet, and are supervised by our Ashramas at Sarisha, Koalpara, Contai and Habiganj respectively. Of these, the school at Mankhanda is meant for the girls and the same will be the case with the one proposed to be opened soon at Brahmankirta in the District of Dacca. Besides these, we have 22 more free primary schools (including night schools) directly managed by our Ashramas.

Swami Madhavananda has promised another regular contribution towards organising lantern lectures for the spread of mass education. The work will be carried on under the supervision of Swami Nirveda-nanda.

The Mission conveys its hearty thanks to Sd. Rajani Mohan Chatterjee, Solicitor of Calcutta who has made a free gift of nearly 20 Bighas of land at Gouripur, near DumDum Cant: with a contribution of the sum of Rs. 3,200/- for its development to open a vocational section of the R. K. Mission Students' Home in Calcutta. There are now altogether seven Students' Home started from different centres in India and Ceylon.

The Mission branch at Baranagar has taken up the construction of two building blocks on the land given over to it by Messrs. D. N. Roy, G. N. Roy and their brothers. The completion of the structures that will be necessary to have the Ashrama removed to its own site will require about Rs 10,000/- more.

A building has been constructed for the workers of the Vidyapith at Deoghar by the kind help of Messrs. Bholanath Dutt & Sons, the well-known paper merchants of Calcutta; and another building for the use of the boys by the kind contribution of the worthy sons of late Butto Kristo Pal of Calcutta has finished completion.

Preaching activities of the Mission in India and abroad have greatly increased from the beginning of the current year.

During the last several months Swami Nirmalananda, who is in charge of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bangalore and under whose fostering care a number of Ashramas have grown in Malabar, Cochin, Travancore and Coorg toured through Northern and Southern India to the great benefit of the places visited. His tour included also Rangoon, Mandalay and Akyab. Everywhere he created a great interest through his conversations and discourses.

After a period of incessant activities in Delhi, Swami Sharvananda spent the last Summer in Mysore Stato. At Bangalore the Swami delivered several lectures. He gave one also at Nandi Hills. As many as eighteen discourses were given by the Swami in the city of Mysore and invited by Mr. Shustry, professor of Persian and Arabic in the Maharajah's College, he delivered an address in Hindi at the Shia Mosque.

Swami Vireswarananda, President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, toured through several places of the South in the last winter and visited Ichhapuram, Berhampore, Parliakimedi, Chicacole, Vizinagaram Rajahmundry, Bezwada, Ellore, Anantapur, Cuddapah and went as far as Mangalore. In many places he delivered lectures on ideals of Vedanta and held discourses and conversations.

Swami Yatiswarananda, the President of the Madras Math went over to Ceylon and gave lectures and held discourses in several places.

The Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Belur Math and of the centres in Calcutta have been conducting many scriptural classes, and they delivered several lectures in different parts of Calcutta and its suburbs. They were also sent out to many parts of Bengal to spread the ideas and ideals of the Mission. Being invited by the Centenary Celebration Committee of the Brahmo Samaj, Swami Nikhilananda represented the Mission and read a paper on the 19th August, on the religious progress within hundred years in Bengal with special reference to the Ramakrishna Movement. The Mission centre at Baliati, Dacca, organised a Village Workers' Conference to discuss about the educational, sanitary and religious problems of the neighbouring villages, and two Swamis were deputed from the Belur Math to help them in their deliberations.

The following magazines, viz., The Udbodhan in Bengali, Prabuddha Bharata in English, and Samanway in Hindu, from Calcutta, the Vedanta Kesari in English, the Ramakrishna Vijayam in Tamil, the Prabuddha Keralam in Malayalam from the South, the Morning Star from Patna, and the Message of the East from U. S. A., are regularly conducted from these centres as part of the preaching work. Among the new publications of the Mission, mention may be made of (1) Six Lessons on Raja Yoga by Swami Vivekananda, (2) Gita Tattwa and Vibidha Prasanga by Swami Saradananda, (3) Life in an Indian Monastery, and Sri Ramakrishna and His Disciples by Sister Devanata of Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, U. S. A. Swami Bodhananda has compiled some of his lectures on Vedanta, from New York. The Report shows that Monsieur Romain Rolland the great French writer is writing biographies of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in French which will be published very shortly in a French Magazine and the right for English and Vernacular translations in India, Ceylon and F. M. S. has been given to the Mayavati Ashrama. The English translation will be published first serially in the Prabuddha

Bharata from the new year and then it will be published in a book form.

In America Swami Madhavananda and Swami Dayananda are conducting the Vedanta Society, in San Francisco. Swami Bodhananda assisted by Swami Gnaneshwarananda is working in New York. Swami Paramananda is in charge of two centres—one, at La Crescenta and another in Boston. Swami Prabhavananda has been the head of the centre at Portland. Swami Akhilananda has recently opened a new centre at Providence, in Rhode Island, U. S. A., and he has received substantial help for the work. There is a proposal of starting another centre at St. Louis. Swami Paramananda has recently opened a temple called "Viswa Temple" in La Crescenta, which is to be the place of worship for people of all faiths, Hindus, Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Jains, and others. The temple contains portraits of the prophets of many religions of the world.

The Ramakrishna Mission has been registered in the Straits Settlements and under that a centre has been recently started in Singapore, with Swami Adyananda in charge.

In India new centres have been opened in Delhi, Nagpur and Ranchi.

A plot of land has been given to the Ashrama at Mysore by the Mysore Government and the construction of an Ashrama building is under project. The Report ends with a hearty thanks to the generous public for their loving co-operation in the activities of the Mission.

Annual Reports of the Bhandarkar Research Institute, Poona, for 1926-1927 and 1927-1928 give a brief outline of the many-sided development the Institute has shown since its formal inauguration in the year 1917. It is indeed gratifying to find that this Research Institute has grown up to be one of the most useful public institutions in the land and has more than fulfilled the expectations entertained of it, though, in fact, there is still enough scope for its further expansion and development. The work of the Institute is divided into seven Departments, and of these, the Publication Department completed the publication of three works, finished the printing of three more and got seven more in the press during the year ending with the 31st March 1927; three numbers of the Institute's Journal were issued; the Institute press undertook the printing of the Annals besides the different publications of the Institute. The Mahabharat Department undertook to publish a fascicule containing the text of the first two Adhyayas of the Adiparva. In short the Institute made a substantial advance towards the ideal in the midst of great financial distress. A well-equipped Library, some Post-graduate lectureships, fellowships and scholarships and a guest-house were, as the Report shows, absolutely necessary to fulfil its noble destiny.

The working of this Research Institute during the year ending with the 6th July 1928 is nonetheless satisfactory. Besides the routine-matters, the following formed the most noticeable constitutional changes in the working of the Institute during the year;—(i) the creation of a separate Press Department; (ii) the creation of an independent Research Department with the object of holding regular Post-graduate classes at the Institute for the training of the M.A. students in Sanskrit; (iii) the reorganisation of the Mahabharat Department. The Institute was visited by His Excellency, the Governor of the

Bombay Presidency, as well as by a number of distinguished European scholars who gave to the members and students of the Institute the benefit of their own studies and researches by delivering lectures at the Institute. In short the Institute has won a recognition and a well-merited appreciation in the scholarly world outside India. But in view of the present financial position of the Institute, it appears that it has not received the measure of financial support it so richly deserves from our countrymen. Substantial pecuniary assistance should immediately be rendered to stabilise the institution and to afford it greater facilities for the expansion of its scope and the realisation of its noble ideal.

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 7 Halder Lane, Calcutta, for the year 1927 is to our hand. The Home is run on the lines of a Brahmacharya Ashrama co-ordinating the ancient ideals of education with modern, and as a necessary supplement of the university education the boys receive spiritual training under the care and guidance of the resident Hindu Sannyasins. Regular classes on the Gita and the works of Swami Vivekananda were held thrice a week, and religious festivals were also performed to intensify their spiritual aspiration. Dignity of labour was taught to the students by allowing them to attend to all household duties in the Home, and a tailoring class was regularly held by an honorary expert during the year under review. The Home accommodated towards the end of the year, 23 students, 17 of whom were free, 4 concession-holders and 2 paying. The results of the University Examinations were also satisfactory. We are indeed sorry to learn that a sum of Rs. 2,394-6-9 was lying with the Bengal National Bank when it went into liquidation, and if the amount is not possible to be recovered, it would be a serious strain upon the financial resources of the institution. In view of the growing usefulness of Home, it stands in need of an immediate expansion of its scope. It intends to accommodate at least one hundred students, who may get here, in addition to this university education, a training in Agriculture, Dairy-farming, and some other useful home industries. For this the Students' Home has to be removed to the suburbs within an easy reach of Calcutta, where it should have at least 25 bighas of land. A big sum has to be raised for the purchase of land and construction of dwelling houses. We hope the public-spirited countrymen would lend substantial pecuniary help to the Home for its further expansion.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BALURGHAT AND BANKURA RELIEF

Owing to the prospect of favourable crops in Bankura and Balurghat we have stopped our relief activities from the third week of November. We therefore beg to inform the public that no further monetary help is required by us now for these areas. We gratefully offer our heart-felt thanks to all who have helped us in cash or kind for conducting the work. A statement of account of the relief work will be shortly published.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA

Secy. R. K. Mission.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”
“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

ॐ

देव्या यया ततमिदं जगदात्मशक्त्या
निःशेषदेवगणशक्तिसमूहमूर्त्या ।
तामम्बिकामखिलदेवमहर्षिपूज्यां
भक्त्यानताः स्म विदधातु शुभानि सा नः ॥
यस्याः प्रभावमतुलं भगवानन्तो
ब्रह्मा हरश्च नहि वक्तुमलं वलंच ।
सा चरिडक्तास्त्रिलजगत्परिपालनाय
नाशाय चाशुभभयस्य मर्तिं करोतु ॥

The Great Goddess who by her own strength pervades the whole universe ; She who is the embodiment of energy of gods and goddesses ; and who is adored by them all and the great sages alike ; to Her do we offer our salutations, humble and full of devotion. May She, the Mother Supreme do good to all !

That Terrible Woman whose infinite power and strength, the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer cannot measure ; may She, the Mother Supreme protect the world and make it free of evils !

DEVIMAHATMYAM

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(Gleanings from letters)

. . . Keep your mind always in holy communion with God, the ideal ; then shall vanish all depravity of the mind. Select a room for daily worship ; and every morning and evening retire there, and sit on your Ashanam ; then in the fragrance of incense perform Japam and meditation and prayer, etc., regularly as long as you can. Born as a man here in this earth the more you can devote yourself to the contemplation of God, the more fruitful will your life become. And the more attached you are to the profanities of the world, the more peaceless you will feel in mind. I pray to the Almighty that out of His endless grace, may He lead you in the right path !

How do you fare in mind now ? But know, without worshipping God you can never have peace of mind. Therefore suspending all activities completely, every day you should spend some time exclusively in the worship of God, in Japam and meditation, and in singing His name and glory and the like True devotion and faith and knowledge are the results of a long and continued practice in Sadhana. Many people are often found to awfully lean towards agnosticism, when with their lukewarm attempt in Sadhana they cannot realise God or attain to the bliss Divine. The reason is not far to seek. These people do not possess a sincere attachment to God. And without this attachment they can only ill afford to persist and persevere in the path of Sadhana ; thus Sadhana proves too hard an enterprise to them. Verily, without Divine attachment and Divine love the mind becomes dry and peaceless. But the more you suffer for God's sake, the more peaceful will you become in the end. "Persist in your attempt cheerfully, my friend," so has said Sri Ramakrishna, "then thou shalt succeed against all odds." So, plunge

yourself headlong into Sadhana and do persevere in it; shrink not even if the very life is hazarded.

. . I am very glad to learn that you have been carrying on your practices with great earnestness and regularity. If this state of things is continued for a couple of years without break, I assure you, my friend, your effort shall not go unrewarded. Let me also remind you that as you are weakly constituted, you need not at this stage sit for long at a stretch ; but proceed slowly and steadily on and on.

. . I propose to start on a pilgrimage for Kashi (Benares) and some other holy places early June next, and spend three or four months in visiting them and also in Sadhana ; but the fruition rests with Him, the Lord.

It is indeed too difficult to have any thought of God within the human breast without the fire of Vairagyam (renunciation) first set aglow. And this is my settled conviction that the more does a man possess this fire in him the greater is the peace that he enjoys. A true and living representation of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagyam we saw in Sri Ramakrishna, the Master. With the process of time we only know him more and more, who he was and how great ! We read of Vivek and Vairagyam in Scriptures but in the Master we saw them personified. It is our misfortune that sitting at the feet of such a unique personality, the embodiment of Viveka and Vairagyam themselves, we could not make them our own.

. . You want to go to Kashi for Sadhana; well, I permit you wholeheartedly. But one thing,—please do not forget to draw me thore, that I may also live in the holy land with you. Oh, the sanctity of Kashi, the greatest and holiest of all places for Sadhana ! Who is not tempted to go over to this sacred place and live ? Whoever comes to me and seeks my counsel regarding a suitable place for carrying on Sadhana I at once suggest to him the sacred name of Kashi ; I tell him to go over there and live in

continuous prayer and meditation. Whenever I am reminded of this holy of holiest places, I wish I could instantly go straight over there throwing off all engagements aside ; really then I find no joy in anything else. It is my strong desire to live the last days of my life in Kashi and I am certain if you only attract me, my desire will be surely fulfilled. And the noblest object of living in this blessed city of Kashi is well attained only when a man can lose himself entirely in the intoxication of love Divine in a lonely retreat quite undisturbed.

INDIA'S RELIGION OF POWER

In this great economy of nature every race has its peculiar characteristics and its distinctive line of progress and evolution.

And to this end the deep-seated instincts of race-culture are very often found to be working throughout the different phases of its career. The panorama of world-activity has conclusively demonstrated that what is cherished and styled as 'progress' in one hemisphere at a particular stage of a nation's evolution, may not be characterised as such with regard to another race or nation under quite a distinct condition of existence. With the march of time and unfoldment of human knowledge, the perspective of men changes, and the whole physiognomy of affairs necessarily assumes altogether a different aspect. In fact progress and evolution are relative terms, and they are appreciated or condemned in so far as they tally with or militate against our cherished notions and standard of progress. The perspective and the objective being thus different in different races, there cannot be any room for the enforcement of an absolute standard of judgment in matters like these, unless the whole humanity is attuned to one single idealism having the sanction of the ultimate verity of human destiny. This is why there is so much acrimony and hatred between the East and the West, between one nation and another. But these differences notwithstanding, progress and activity are held to constitute unfailing signs of growth in every living organism. In India the dawn of a spirit of Renaissance in the various phases of her collective life has unfolded a

new chapter in the history of the nation ; and this stimulus has ushered into being some very important phenomena that demand a careful consideration and attention.

It is now time for us to pause for a while to ascertain the nature of progress we have attained, in the light of our cultural bent and tradition, and see how far the method applied for the uplift of this sunken race has been conducive to its well-being. Indeed we have reached a stage when these principles must be clearly defined to preclude the possibility of any further misunderstanding. No doubt, there are some indications of a new awakening in the country, but we find to our disappointment that this ferment notwithstanding, the bulk of the Indian people still lie nonchalant to the principles of the neo-political philosophy spun out of late to wake up this dormant race ; and the results, so far achieved in the pursuit of our national end, do not, when judged from the standpoint of our ideal of progress, justify our expectations. One fundamental reason for this lack of adequate response from the people is that the vital issues of national life have been more or less brushed aside to make room for some outlandish ideas and principles that are not congenial to the temper and genius of the Indian people. Foreign ideals—some even Semetic in their origin—have been implanted and nurtured in the Indian soil, and have consequently failed to strike a deep root in the traditional instincts of the race. The lofty idealism as set forth in our scriptures—an idealism that, judged from the view-point of the Truth Eternal, has been the formative force in the moulding of Indian history and civilisation—has now been held at a discount by a certain section of Indian thinkers. Their unbalanced accentuation on the physical or material aspect of human life is no less erroneous and destructive of real cultural advancement in our country than the blind and exclusive emphasis given by some on matters spiritual to the negation of other possibilities of life. In fact a harmonious blending and application of the physical and the spiritual forces makes for a healthy growth in individual and collective existence. Blind imitation of everything foreign without due consideration of its intrinsic merit has, moreover, done its worst in our public life, and reduced many great souls into so many life-less automata and gramophone-recorders of alien habits and ideas. Such a

slavish mentality and narrow-minded outlook which is destitute of independence and vitality, is revolting to every sense of humanity,—evoking that feeling of disgust which every truly living being feels for any form of servience and parasitism. Sir John Woodroffe, one of the best students of Indian culture, seems to be perfectly right when he says: “Here are persons who think that this country must be westernized, that its natural collectivist spirit must go, yielding to Western Individualism and so on. But how do you know with certainty what the future will bring? The great war has upset many fancies concerning the future.....I clearly see that if the governing principles of Indian civilisation productive of the essentials of Indian character suffer defeat in the country of their origin, it will be at its own. Never has it been in such a danger as at the present time, when disruptive forces alien to the true Indian spirit have commenced their work.”

Indiscriminate criticisms are also being levelled now a days at the idea of compatibility of religion with politics without even realising the true import of religion and the importance of the Indian historical traditions. We have pointed out times without number that our idea and standard of progress materially differs from those of the Western nations, and that the genius of the Indian people is not on all fours with that of the West, and has therefore had its characteristic expression as a distinct phenomenon in the peculiar environments of its own. The religion we speak of, when truly lived, opens a new vision and adds a greater momentum to the otherwise humdrum and dull tenor of existence. A life of religion is but a life of continuous sacrifice whether it be in the field of politics or in the domain of social service. True religion does not signify merely an intellectual assent to some set form of dogma or ritual but the realisation of the divinity in man through the gradual unfoldment of his spiritual being. Vedanta, the crown of Hindu philosophy, proclaims in the most unambiguous terms that the human soul is identical with Brahman whose nature is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute, and as such beyond every form of change and destruction. He indeed is blessed who dares to gaze on the very face of the Reality, and realises the deeper significance of this bold message of the Upanishads. Deathless he stands on the shore of

the infinite ocean of life; fearless he marches on to the thick of the fray. For, neither the sword of an emperor nor the worldly misfortune can check the heroic pursuit of his cherished ideal. Time was when even a naked Brahmin sitting calm and unperturbed on a slab of stone could breathe defiance at the haughty and proud words of even Alexander the Great who held out the threat of death for non-compliance with his peremptory command. "You never told such a falsehood in your life," quickly retorted the Brahmin, "as you tell just now. Who can kill me? Me you kill, emperor of the material world! Never! 'For I am spirit unborn and undecaying; never was I born and never shall I cease to exist. I am the Eternal Ancient One; I am not killed even if the body is done to death?' And you kill me, child that you are!" Mighty words they are, pregnant with the fire of spiritual realisation. Even now at this distant age they vibrate clear and distinct into our ears and remind us of the triumph that Knowledge scores over death in all ages and defies the rolling cataclysms of worldly misfortunes. But what an irony of fate this sublime idealism of the ancient Rishis has been trampled under foot in this age of materialism, and an imbecile theory of 'passivity' has taken the place of pristine heroism! Freedom—physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom—is the message of the Upanishads. It is the unyielding tenacity of a Nachiketa to stand face to face with death for the achievement of the desired end, that is the desideratum of the modern age. This is the religion of the Vedanta,—the religion that must form the groundwork of all our national activities and lead to the consummation of all our synthetic aspirations,—the only light that relumes India's path to Freedom.

It is in India and India alone that physical prowess has even been idealised into a spiritual potency, and utilised for the benefit of mankind. Forces, physical or spiritual, are but the different manifestations of the same eternal energy; it only assumes various forms according as it passes through different vehicles of expression. In fact it is the motive and the end of application that colour and change its character. The material achievements of the West—the unique contributions of science—are not bad in themselves in so far as they promote human happiness, but when they are

employed to pander to the diabolical instincts of human nature, they prove veritable engines of destruction and become subversive of the peace of the world. Force is one ; man calls it by various names. The energy that struggled for expression in the Indian Yogi seated in the silent sanctum of a Himalayan recess, the energy that moved a Raphael or a Shakespeare to visions of beauty, is the very same energy that inspired a Caesar and a Napoleon, and even now prompts many an Indian youth to fling away his life in the service of the motherland. The energy is the same ; but the outlook and application are different. When the motive is spiritualised the whole aspect of activity in both political and social spheres acquires a new significance. But it degenerates into "brute " force when the spiritual vision is not brought to bear on the whole trend of our activity. Moreover, in our enthusiasm we very often forget that what is held to be the ideal of an individual gifted with an uncommon spiritual nature and outlook, cannot be enforced as such for the guidance of the whole nation unless the grounds are quite prepared and its mental outlook sufficiently broadened to grasp the deeper import of such a spiritual message. Much mischief has already been done to the country by the promulgation of such an ideal before our countrymen who are grovelling in the slough of despond and inactivity. India to-day wants a Religion of Power that should accommodate a synthetic working of both the spiritual and physical forces in the achievement of human good.

Too much of sentimentalism and effeminacy have almost devitalised the once virile race into a lifeless mass. A lofty ideal of 'intense activity' (Rajas) must now be placed before all to stimulate their latent potency. But it is a pity that in spite of such a morbid inertia as exists among the masses, there has of late been a craze for the promulgation of a neo-political philosophy calculated to stamp out the lingering sparks of martial spirit from the heart of India !

Needless to say, the elimination of physical force from the sphere of human activity is as suicidal as the blind denial of spirituality in the multifold achievement of Indian life. Both have their due scope and utility in the comprehensive scheme of national well-being. Our history and Puranas furnish beautiful illustrations of how even in this physical plane of activity the

proper application of our martial strength tempered by our lofty spiritual ideal has been productive of incalculable good to humanity. Is it not a fact that Sri Ramachandra—one of the greatest incarnations in India—had to take to arms for the rescue of his beloved consort, Sita, from the clutches of the demon-king Ravana of Ceylon? Is it not also a fact that Sri Krishna, the most luminous personality in the age of Mahabharata, had to preach to his heroic disciple the virtue of fighting with the enemies when such a bold fight was absolutely necessary? Did he not thunder forth in the grim field of battle,—

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्यात्माचेतसा ।

निराशीनिर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥

“Dedicating all the fruits of thy action to Me, with thy thought resting on the Self, being free from desire, free from selfishness and weakness, do thou fight.” This is the ideal that was also taught by the Lord to the Sun at the commencement of Evolution in order to infuse strength into the Kshatriyas, the rulers of the world. It is only when possessed of the strength of this Yoga, that they can protect the Brahmanas, the spiritual class. *And when the spiritual and ruling classes are well maintained, it is possible to maintain the world.* (Vide Sankara's Commentary on the Gita, Chap. IV. Sloka I.) The history of India would have been written otherwise had there been no scope for the cultivation and manipulation of the Kshatra Dharma for the betterment of the human lot. The Puranas are also replete with many a fitting illustration of the very same principle. The Goddess of Power even incarnated Herself from time to time with deadly weapons to deliver the oppressed gods from the tyranny of the Asuras. The heroic feats of Asoka and Samudragupta, the Pala Kings of Bengal and the Rajputs of Rajasthan, the Sikhs and the Mahrattas are but living instances of what is absolutely necessary for the palingenesis of the sunken souls of India. In short, the achievements of these Buddhist and Hindu monarchs of India stand as undying lessons to the children of the soil for ages to come. Our religion is thus a Religion of Power—both physical and spiritual, and has nothing to do with the philosophy that does not stimulate the martial instincts of the race but teaches a “gentle” submission to every form of insult

and tyranny—a mentality which is but another name for servility begotten of age-long subjection and insipid existence. “What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose *in any fashion*, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face.” This is the inexorable command of our Religion, and this is what Swami Vivekananda also demanded of every son of India.

The Hindu religion decries in no uncertain terms any misuse of that power—whether it be spiritual or physical. This energy is deified when it is pressed into the service of humanity for the achievement of common good. Every Indian must be physically and spiritually strong and make a proper use of the forces at his command whenever the country demands it. The virile idealism of the Vedantic religion—the religion of the Hindus—must again be lived; for it is the very life-blood of our race. The sublime conception of the Vedanta should no longer remain cooped up within the silent recesses of the caves or forests but must be brought out of seclusion and broadcasted amongst the dumb masses of India to dehypnotise them from their self-created delusion of weakness. “These truths must now come to work out at the Bar and the Bench, in the pulpit and the cottage of the poor, with the fishermen that are catching fish and with the students that are studying; for if the fisherman thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman, if the lawyer thinks that he is the Soul, he will be a better lawyer: so the labourer, the student and the soldier”, says Swami Vivekananda. The Upanishads are the inexhaustible mine of strength and inspiration and call with the voice of a trumpet upon the weak, the miserable and the downtrodden to stand upon their feet and be free; for freedom is the watchword of our Religion.

The problems of India are too apparent to need any philosophical explanation. Ours is a land where religion has tintured every activity of life, as it has entered into the very foundation of our national being. The ideal that found a living utterance in Buddha and Sankara, Ramanuj and Nanaḥ, Chaitanya and Ramdas, has again met with a synthetic fulfilment in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The teachings of this galaxy of

saints and prophets are but the unmistakable echoes of the Supreme Truth embodied in the Vedas. Let this message of our holy scriptures—the message of strength—be promulgated from the platform and the press, in the schools and the colleges, and carried to every cottage-door of India to instil renewed life and vigour into the dormant masses of the country. They must be awakened to the consciousness of their infinite capacity and noble heritage, their ideal and achievements and be buoyed up to determine and shape the long-obscure destiny of their motherland. India is not dead. On the contrary she has survived all the great shocks of the shining centuries of the past. She is still a living force and is feared; for she is still potentially powerful to impose her ideas upon the world. She is still an antagonist to be reckoned with in the conflict of cultures. Rightly has Sir Arthur Avalon remarked in his *Bharat-Shakti*: “India is not a mere congeries of people. India is an Idea. It is a particular Shakti, the Bharat-Shakti distinguished from all others by Her own peculiar nature and qualities. The basis of all culture and the maker of all nationality is religion. This is the root and trunk of the great tree of life with many branches, amongst which the chief are those of Philosophy and Art, of Knowledge and Beauty.” Indeed, India is not dead; the signs of a re-awakening are already manifest on the horizon. It is only a question of time to see her once more firmly established on the pinnacle of her pristine glory, and occupy an honoured place in the vanguard of nations. “The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking; and a voice is coming unto us,—away back where history and tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the past, coming down from there, reflected as it were, from peak to peak of this infinite Himalaya of knowledge, and of love, and of work, India, this motherland of ours—a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterance and is gaining volume as days pass away, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away; the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more, no outward powers can hold her back any

more, for the infinite giant is rising to her feet." Let us attune our voice to that of Swami Vivekananda and say unto Mother India :—

"Resume Thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever,
Forward! Speak thy stirring words."

FROM LIGHT UNTO MORE LIGHT

By Svami Nirlepananda

The other day we were going through a nice article on the present day life of Great Britain from the lively pen of Mr. C. F. Andrews, who recently had enough experiences of it in London and adjacent places. The writer therein has painfully pointed out that England's engrossing attention has now been turned towards the production of wealth and national equipment—naval as well as military. All talk of a spiritual, altruistic outlook of life is thrown safely into the background. The epidemic germs of a vicious, virulent type of nationalism (rampant all over Europe) have caught her up in an iron clasp. There is no escaping it. A lamentable *madness* has come over her. And this spirited Englishman has rightly condemned it point-blank. England has roused and applied herself, heart and soul, towards her material betterment with a vengeance!

Previous to this phase, just after the world war as a natural, immediate reaction, there *were* signs visible in British life-horizon—of a feeling of bitter hatred and repugnance towards the blood-stained business recently concluded. After a period of intensely artificial nerve-tension England's weary arms wanted rest very badly—rather *panted* for it. There was a stir for the better. Proposals were afloat for ending the nefarious, inhuman man-killing process. These were heard with beseeching seriousness. A charitable *rapprochement*, love and a high-flown fellow-feeling—all seemed on the point of being realised, achieved. But now instead of all this there is a discreet silence!

Again and again in the history of modern Europe all peace pour-parlers have proved futile in effect before an insatiable, ever-increasing land-grab, a frenzy of economic exploitation and an attendant monopoly of world's wealth. Spain, England, France, Russia, Germany—

all have vied with one another in this big game of Imperialism. Hague Conferences have been held and held over again. International laws with all their arrays of little details have been framed; but after the lapse of a few years all established conventions were treated as so many scraps of paper and verbiage when the ghost of Imperialism possessed some powerful royal brain. Pacifism, Humanism—and all higher ideals have received rude shocks right and left.

Yet the peace-strain in European political life as evident from the recent activities of the League of Nations, has not altogether died out. There are yet rustlings from the Pacifists' Quarters. Visionaries are still trotting this globe, although their number has ever been very small, in fact—few and far between. They have ever been decried and laughed at. The belligerent mood of many European powers prompted them to put into prison some of these arch-pacifists so that they could freely pursue their last memorable feverish scramble through an unnumbered calvary fields! But we still read in the papers of the chequered career of the Kellogg Pact, upholding at any rate the principle of *lesser* arms and ammunitions.

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To-day we have the privilege to remember a pithy, pregnant pronouncement from the mouth of one who had been in the thickest of the fight. It appears to us with new implications and added forces. Clemenceau, a prince among men, earned for himself the title of the Tiger, perhaps for some of his daring, brilliant achievements—his record of military feats. He still lives as a grandsire of eighty-six. An active personality who had been wide alert all through life is reported thus by an interviewer:

The following interrogation was put to the Tiger: "What is supreme human achievement, sir?"

A grave and direct answer came,—“To be a Philosopher...Life is no longer worth living when one has exhausted its possibilities.”

——This was evidently not from the proverbial Eastern day-dreamer, from the mouth of a habitually pacifist—an ochre-clad san-nyasin. It neither signifies a total prohibition of war. But this ought to be an eye-opener to the military extremists and attract their supreme attention and cry halt for the time-being at least to the huge poison-gas and other untold scientific killing apparatus—arrangements afoot. It required all the sad series of experiences for the Tiger to come to the above conclusion.

Nobody believes in his heart of hearts a total disarmament *regime*—that all on a sudden one fine morning the whole world will be converted into the tenets of Pacifism and that arms and ammunitions

will for all ages to come be things of yesterday. So long as man is man this state of things will perhaps ever be far off. But the point is that in course of our material strivings (which are all too important) the *mantram* of amity must also have its sponsors, its votaries. A band of enthusiastic men in every nation with a higher vision, higher ideation, with power to give a leading to their countrymen is what this war-weary age requires. That high-pitch note must be kept up. This alone will enable the world to maintain its balance all right.

We have been informed that thirteen European powers have seen their way somehow to sign the Kellogg Pact. It may not be heart-deep. Many of the signatories themselves know this. We are told that even small, negligible powers (not to talk of the Bigger Ones) are all after secret mobilisations. Everybody smells danger every moment. Disbelief is the order of the day. And the too familiar, biological instinct of self-preservation is having its full, logical play. A few random figures will speak for themselves. Roumania, Poland and Czecho Slovakia have a total population of 60,000,000. These three countries which are living from hand to mouth have now a total of 51,700 army officers! But the brave ones who are up after international arbitration must not lose heart! There is laughing in the sleeves by many a Big Political Power of the world. The main stipulations of the Pact relate to the lessening of the weapons of warfare, etc. Anyway it is a piece of happy news. Paris, the mother city of the continent of Europe, her intellectual and cultural barometer, has the privilege to be the venue of this International Compromise Camp. If as a result of mutual discussions and deliberations the Powers see their way to agree to the establishment of an International Arbitration Court, the future world will hail it. But what about the subject-nations which form a very strong element of the world's population? The Big Five Powers must not safely forget that these latter ones also form an important part in Providence's Cosmos and unless their heart-burning is allayed—grievances heeded to in a spirit of fellowship, the festering wound of discontent would pollute the health of the whole organism.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that the world statesmen are now too busy with their vaunted schemes to hear counsels printed in the pages of this journal. But what of that? Even from his circumscribed circle where he is posted by Providence, man must give good account of himself—study local as well as world-issues and keep his mind always awakened, always alert. Even the poor cultivator's thatched cottage-doors stand on the road to the Infinite. And the

conscious, living mind everywhere must try to read the world-situation. Parochial, water-tight compartments are fast vanishing away before our very eyes. Steam, electricity, wireless, airships are all respectively working miracles. The Vedantic doctrine of Unity is now having afresh its scientific, objective demonstrations. The world was as if awaiting for this material unfoldment, a novel exposition in a tangible, concrete garb. In course of the world's 'evolution' man in a sense is tending to become more gross,—highly hardened. We welcome with all earnestness these re-discoveries, swelling confirmations. For, from a special point of view what are *additions to knowledge* but mere *re-statements* in the light of newer needs, changed situations?

If the individual mind loses its hold amidst this heaped up, bewildering variety it has no right to live. Our respective observations must be knit together into proper sequences to form complete, whole, reasoned, thought-plexuses. Like a weaver's quick shuttle life is an eternal gliding process from the particular to the general, from the personal to the cosmopersonal planes. From wider, universal, big problems let us end in an individual note. For the two are never contradictory. The world needs once more the vigorous teachings of the Vedanta to bring about its regeneration in every respect,—social, economic and political. A strong, moral foundation has been scrupulously insisted upon. For our Religion is nothing but Applied Philosophy, if we may use the expression. But Vedanta never makes a fetish of the doctrine of Sin. Man errs every moment. There is back-sliding, derangement, derailment at every turn. Yet man must not lose hope. Neither must he justify these mishaps. It never means upholding of an antinomian philosophy. Like a bold soldier let him exclaim with a Vivekananda—Blessed Sin! Blessed Superstition!! *Blessed* not in themselves but because they are stopping-stones to greater, fuller truths. Let this series of iniquities burn up all our inner impurities and help us in regaining our much-prized poise. In a sense, from this newer point of view, we really never travel from darkness to light, but more properly from lesser light to more light.

We are essentially the children of Bliss. This has been over and over again emphasised by all our sacred texts. The line which every Hindu has been enjoined upon to repeat and think over, every morning before he stirs out, represents the acme of Vedic lore: *Suchchidananda-svarupoham na Shokabhak*. My real identity is *Sat, Chit* and *Anandam*. I am not subject to little playthings of the world. These should not be allowed to create disturbance in my mental constitution.

In the pages of India's vast religious literature a systematic attempt may be detected to begin from the highest summit. In philo-

sophical phraseologies it has been termed the imposition of the *siddha* state even on a mind that is full of *asiddha samskaras*, imperfect habits and propensities. To put it in short, the aim and object of all our Mantra Shastras—Vedantic, Yogic, and the more recent Tantric—have been by a slow, assiduous process of mental cure or auto-suggestion or a practical course of spiritual training, to repeatedly harp on the full, perfection-aspect of life amidst all apparent faults, foibles and imperfections of man. The Jiva is to be finally killed and the inner Shiva brought out, manifested. I am He,—I am He,—Brahman, pure, unalloyed, spotless of all Samsara-Samskaras,—has been the mad cry of the Indian Sadhaka in every phase of our spiritual history—ancient, mediæval and modern. The strong momentum, force of Jiva-littleness, which has compelled us to assume many a garb with distinct names and forms in an endless chain of incarnations, must finally come to a stand-still. Our saints, one and all—from Buddha to Ramakrishna have proclaimed this supreme message which we have forgotten and are still forgetting—sometimes cared not to listen to it at all. They have known very intimately—they have been safely *confided with* all our littleness, imperfections, defects and shortcomings. Still they have reminded man of his greatness and magnanimity. Preposterous! We have strongly retorted. But they have smiled and led us to a realm of *being* and *becoming*, of *realisation*. They have given sufficient, demonstrable evidences in their own lines of their rare grit and genius, and specially their *genuineness*. In course of an enunciation of their teachings many a secret in the path of practical morality and well-being has been unfolded. Hinduism or more exactly Vedantism has evolved in its bosom a perfect science of mental hygiene. The conception of the Seven Planes of Vedanta (elaborated in Yoga-Vashistha) or the gradual ascent of the inner Light (Jyotih)—the Kundalini Shakti in every Jivatman are just cases in point. The Tantric *recipes* of different Pujas when viewed aright are nothing but the grand Advaita Philosophy concretised,—made more practical for the masses. The Tantras represent a glorious landmark in the evolution of our popular religion. Vedanta has been misconstrued to justify a doctrine of indifferent morality by the quacks. But its pronouncements are quite unclouded, definite on this point. In fact, the essence of Vedantic teachings is,—out of evil, through *good* only, can we transcend both good and evil. Anything which makes us *weak* is sin, is evil. And anything which makes us *strong* is good. The inner problem before man in every age is to get back the *balance*, the *equipoise* he has lost. Philosophically that is described as the equilibrium-stage of the three gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. This is symbolic and universal. If we have the eyes to detect we can see the working

of this truth, wherever we turn—to political, economic or social fields—this royal principle has fallen, *apparently* irretrievably into the gutter. And the best mind in every field is trying to undertake untold Rescue Works. Restoration of balances, as far as practicable has been and is the goal—the eternal Ideal.

We must learn to hate with all our heart a sham, showy, spurious type of Puritanism. With an artist's vision we have to try to evaluate humanity anew. Amidst all his *falls* we have to acquire the knack of looking beyond all outer crusts. Sympathy is the highest artist in human history. A Shakespeare or a Vivekananda, to speak in the same breath, respectively became what they were in their own fields, only because they had this rare treasure in an uncommon measure in the innermost, secret preserves of their hearts. In writing his immortal *Macbeth* a Shakespeare alone could entirely suppress—boldly *deny* the ordinary criminologist's point of view. A Christ—paragon among artists also trampled underneath his feet all fashionable, social opinions—formalisms, when he gave his grace to a *Mar-Magdaline*. A Ramakrishna could touch the much-maligned histrionic artist-women as manifestations of his Divine Mother. A Vivekananda kissed the Pariah and the Negro without the least wavering or compunction. A Ramachandra was too glad to institute a sacred, solemn, sweet friendship with a Chandal. All these personalities were adepts in the sublime art of reading between the lines.

The rankest sinner, apparently beyond all possibilities of redemption, we must not forget (and if he is frank enough he says so boldly) indulges in his evil practises just because he does not receive pleasure elsewhere. He is in a realm of lesser light. Of course we leave out of account what the legal practitioner has to say upon it as a professional man.

Finally, let us remember and act up to the supreme injunction of Vivekananda, the prophet of New Bengal and Newer Ind—say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is Divine.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN AMERICA

By Swami Atulananda

The story of the life of the Swami Vivekananda is the story of the development of great ideas. It is the story of a soul groping struggling for light and self-realization; and finally of attainment. It is the story of the inner nature of man. First, intellectual

struggle, scepticism and doubt ; then burning faith and illumination. These were the stages through which the Swami Vivekananda passed before he became the great exponent of the Vedanta Religion, the greatest of his time.

In the presence of the Swami Vivekananda we stand in the presence of spirit self-revealed, we stand face to face with Reality. Listening to his voice, we listen to a voice coming from afar, a voice reverberating through the ages, travelling in silence, recognized only by mystics and sages. Blessed are they who can hear that voice ; twice blessed are they, who came under the spell of that voice when made audible to mortal hearing.

When we study the life of the Swami Vivekananda we study the book of life. For his was a life not only of divine revelations, but also of extraordinary human events.

Before his meeting with his divine Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the Swami Vivekananda was known as a restless youth with a keen intellect, always in search of truth. Steeped in Western culture, he was constantly analyzing the religious and social conditions not only of his own land, but also of foreign nations. But when he met his Master a new thought-world opened up before him. For in the Temple-garden at Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, he found a man, the living embodiment of the ancient wisdom and culture of the East. Nay, more ! He found a man who could stand up and say, " I have seen God."

It was the blending of these two lives, of the mature sage at Dakshineswar and of the young college student, known as Noren, that produced the personality revered by the world today as the Swami Vivekananda.

It was as the spokesman of his Master's message that we know the Swami in America. We knew him as the young prophet burning with zeal and enthusiasm, a magnetic personality, his eyes shining with a spiritual light. At the very beginning of his public career in America, at the opening of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the man stood revealed. At the very opening sentence of his short address six thousand men and women rose to their feet applauding the foreign monk. The audience was touched as no preceding speaker had been able to touch them. The Swami's masterly address on that occasion alone would have been sufficient to secure for him an exalted position in the American mind.

Swamiji's genius expressed itself in various ways. In his lectures in America he threw a new light on the Vedanta philosophy, he

breathed new life into the ancient scriptures, he made Vedanta a living, practical power in the lives of the people.

The Swami Vivekananda, as Sister Nivedita put it, came to us without credentials. He came as he had wandered in India from village to village, and with American hospitality he was welcomed and accorded an opportunity to speak. And when he spoke it was of the religious ideas of the Hindus. What Swamiji accomplished in his first address directed to the nations of the world at Chicago was a marvelous disclosure of his genius.

Not only the different Christian churches were represented, but also eight great non-Christian religions. Those were Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism and Mazdaism. Each representative of these great faiths spoke from his own limited standpoint.

When Swami Vivekananda spoke a new atmosphere seemed to pour into the great Hall of Columbus. A new spirit took possession of the audience. Sectarianism, bigotry, superstition were swept aside to make room for the harmony of all religions. It was an overwhelming message of goodwill and brotherly love.

After addressing his audience as 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' when at last the applause that greeted these words had subsided, the Swami began by thanking his audience for their cordial welcome. He thanked them in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; he thanked them in the name of the millions of Hindus of all classes and sects. "I am proud," he said, "to belong to a religion that has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance." And he closed by expressing his hope that the bell that tolled that morning in honor of the Convention might be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecution, and of all uncharitable feeling.

Here the religious consciousness of India spoke through the Swami Vivekananda, addressing itself to the religious consciousness of the West. Behind the Swami stretched a world that dated from the Vedic period, long ages of spiritual development. Facing him sat the new world, young, tumultuous, overflowing with energy and self-assurance, yet alert and inquisitive. Into the ears of the youngest among the nations he poured the wisdom of the ages. "We Hindus," he said, "do not merely tolerate, or unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedan, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrian, and kneeling before the cross of the Christian. We gather the flowers of all religions, and binding them together with the cord of love, make them into a beautiful bouquet of

worships." And with the insight of the prophet he declared, "Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of their resistance, 'Help, and not fight, assimilation and not destruction, harmony and peace, and not dissension.'"

Swamiji spoke to us of Mukti, the doctrine that man becomes divine by realizing the Divine. "Religion," he said, "reaches its perfection in us only when it leads us to 'Him who is the One life in a universe of death, to Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, to Him who is the only Soul, of which all souls are but delusive manifestations.'" And when he spoke of the doctrine of the Ishta Devata, the right of each soul to choose its own path, and to seek God in its own way, the West was startled by his catholicity. For such freedom in religion they had not even dreamt of. For divided as the numerous Christian churches may be, they all agree on this one point, that there is one path and one only, one Saviour, Jesus the Christ. And unless one believes in him there is no salvation.

But the Swami Vivekananda pointed out that such a narrow conception of religion invariably leads to fanaticism. And in his own humorous way he told the story of the frog who thought that his little well was the universe. "All isms," Swamiji said, "are little frogs hypnotised into the belief that their particular wells are the best and grandest. Fanatics refuse to listen to what other religions have to teach." And he chanted, 'Hear ye children of immortal bliss, even ye that dwell in the highest spheres, for I have found the Eternal One, and knowing Him ye also shall be freed from death.' "Then alone," he said, "can misery cease, when I am one with happiness; then alone can error cease, when I am one with wisdom; then alone can death cease, when I am one with life."

Swamiji had little patience with the constant harping on original sin, in the West. "Why do you dwell on sin so much," he exclaimed. "You are heirs of immortal bliss. We Hindus refuse to call you sinners! Ye are the children of God, holy and perfect beings. It is sin to call man a sinner, it is a libel on human nature." And straightening himself to his full length he called out, "Come, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep? You are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal! In the heart of every one of you the same truth reigns!" Thus swamiji cleared the theological atmosphere of the West. He sounded the trumpet-call of glad tidings, of hope, of cheer, of salvation for all. And a new thought-wave swept over America. Swamiji brought the Gospel of the Divinity of man.

At the Parliament of Religions the Swami Vivekananda had suddenly become a world-figure. The newspapers acclaimed him the

greatest figure at the Parliament, a noble, sincere man, learned beyond compare. The New York Critique spoke of him as an orator by Divine Right. The Hon'ble Mr. Snell wrote that on all occasions the Swami was received with the greatest enthusiasm. People thronged about him wherever he went, and hung with eagerness on his every word. The more liberal Christians confessed that he was 'a prince among men.'

Thus, through the newspapers the masses of America came to learn about the wonderful monk from India. Thus the Swami was introduced to the American nation, for every American even in the smallest villages reads his paper.

Thousands of enlightened persons felt that the Swami was, indeed, an Oriental prophet with a new message. And so meteoric was the transformation from obscurity to fame, that it can be truly said that Swamiji awoke one morning to find himself famous.

But to Swamiji all this glorification was as so much straw. It did not touch or elate him. He bowed down to that great, divine Power that stood behind him, that inspired him, that spoke and acted through him. He rather regretted, as his letters show, that the joy of the free life of the unknown Sannyasin was at an end. There was no more quiet, no more the peace of retirement. His life was now for the public, ceaseless labour, giving himself for the good of all.

Neither was his task always a pleasant one. Travelling from place to place, always lecturing, always teaching, taxed his strength to the utmost. Then, ignorant people plied him with stupid, irritating questions. Upon these he fell like a thunderbolt to defend his faith, to uphold the prestige of his motherland. His replies came as flashes of lightning, sometimes to the discomfort of the questioner.

Swamiji had come to speak the truth, not to flatter, to win applause. He had great reverence for Christ and his teaching, but he saw the flaws in Christianity as it was preached. He pointed out the defects in Christian doctrines, and in so-called Christian civilization. In Detroit, before a large audience he exclaimed, "You train and educate and pay men, to do what? To come over to our country and curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion, everything we hold sacred. These men come to us and say, 'You idolaters, you will go to hell?' If India stood up and threw at you all the mud of the Indian ocean she would not be doing the smallest part of what you are doing to us. And for what? Did we ever try to convert the West to our religion? Nay! We say to you,—Have your own religion and let us have ours. Neither have I come to make you Hindus. I have come to make you better Christians. Remember Christ's saying, 'Blessed

are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.' Everything that has selfishness for its basis must perish. If you want to live go back to Christ. Go back to him who had nowhere to rest his head. Go back to him, and give up your vain pursuits. Better live in rags with Christ than in palaces without him."

It is no wonder that some of Swamiji's utterances gave rise to opposition, and some tried to impair his reputation. But amidst all these distractions he remained simple and pure as a child, trusting in God.

On one occasion he said, "I am a plain-spoken man, but I mean well. I want to tell you the truth. You are my children. I want to show you the way to God by pointing out your errors. Therefore I do not flatter you, or always say fine things about your civilization. I point out to you what Christ taught." And when a distinguished clergyman asked him how he could understand Christ so well, Swamiji replied, "Why? Jesus was an Oriental. It is only natural for us Orientals to understand and love him."

And again, when he was asked if he did not resent the false reports circulated about him, he said very gently, "Not at all. This also is the voice of the Beloved. My Master would never recognize personal abuse or malice. 'Everything,' he said, 'comes from the Mother Divine.'"

During his first period in America, Swamiji found a life of constant change a great strain, mentally and physically. By nature he was meditative. His friends often found him wrapt in his own thoughts, hardly conscious of his surroundings. But the constant friction of alien thought, endless questioning, and the frequent clash of wits in the Western world, awoke in him a different spirit. He became as alert and wide-awake as the world in which he found himself. He began to study various problems. He compared Western and Eastern culture, and he investigated the industrial and economic systems of America, that he might apply these later to the wants of his own people. He visited museums, universities and art galleries. He became a keen student of American life. As the result of these observations he later declared, "As regards spirituality the Americans are far inferior to us, but their society is superior to ours. We will teach them spirituality, and assimilate what is best in their society."

Swamiji was now admitted into all classes of society, even the most exclusive. Thus he met the most brilliant intellects in America. The famous orator and agnostic, Ingersoll, himself a man of bold and fearless speech, once told the Swami, "If you had come forty years ago to

preach in this country, the people would have hanged you. But now the nation is somewhat prepared to accept you. Your ideas are most enlightening." And Mr. Tesla, the most distinguished scientist of his time, said, "Swamiji, I appreciate your lectures so much because they are so scientific."

But Swamiji was not satisfied with fame. He felt that the interest he had awakened was after all superficial. He desired earnest-minded disciples whom he could teach the deeper truths of Vedanta, who would follow his advice, and struggle for God-realization. He therefore began to hold private classes in New York city. There, in his own room, students came to him. They sat on the floor in Indian fashion. As one of these students has expressed it, "How intensely interesting were these classes! Those who were privileged to attend them can never forget it. We seemed to live in a different world, to be transplanted to a higher sphere, and when we went home we seemed to walk on air. Swamiji was so dignified, still so simple, so earnest, so eloquent."

In this humble way did the Swami Vivekananda inaugurate his work in New York. Thus he taught wealthy Americans of high position in the fashion of the ancient Rishis. He felt that now he was carrying on his work, slowly but surely, on the right footing. He gave himself in teaching and training these chosen disciples. He taught them how to calm the restless mind, how to control the senses, how to lead the natural desires into spiritual channels. He taught them to meditate and to form the habit of thinking spiritual thoughts. He explained that religion is not a question of belief, but of realization, and that realization comes only after earnest practice.

Swamiji lived not for himself, he lived for others. "I do not care for Bhakti or Mukti for myself," he declared. "May I be born again and again, and suffer a thousand miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, my God in the poor and the ignorant of all races and all creeds. I would go through a thousand hells to do good to others. This is my religion."

Swamiji taught from the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. He taught the different systems of Yoga as so many paths to realize God. He preached the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. His was a religion of strength and fearlessness. Fear, he declared to be the greatest sin. "Man is born to conquer nature. Faith in ourselves and faith in God, this is the secret of greatness. We are the Atman, deathless and free, pure by nature. Life is short, the vanities of the world are transient. Let us preach and live the Truth." And again he said, "Desire nothing, look for no return. It is desirelessness that brings results,

and remember, the stepping-stone, the real centre, the real heart of all spiritual culture is Renunciation. Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached."

Once Swamiji said, "If I succeed in helping one single person to realize God, I shall feel that my labor has not been in vain. I shall consider my work a success."

We tread here on sacred ground. We are not here at liberty to indulge in vain speculations. But, perhaps, I may be permitted to give it as my sincere conviction that this hope of Swamiji was more than fulfilled. Certain it is that the Swami Vivekananda has been a spiritual blessing in the lives of thousands of Americans.

Those of you who have watched the growth of the American mentality since Swamiji's advent in that country will agree with me that Swamiji's work has not been in vain.

To day in magazine articles and other publications; to day from platform and pulpit, ideas are promulgated akin to the teachings of Vedanta. For this broader outlook the Swami Vivekananda laid the foundation. To day science with its marvellous progress is approaching the ancient Truth, taught by the Indian Rishis, ages ago, the Truth that one Intelligence, one stable Consciousness is at the back of this ever-changing universe.

The American mind is in search of a final solution of the problem of life. This solution, so far as human speech can reveal it, has been placed before the Congress of nations by Swami Vivekananda, thirty-five years ago. Brother Sannyasins have followed Swamiji in the field. And at present seven trained Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission are in America, in different cities, preaching the life-giving truths of Vedanta.

America is a vast country. The number of workers is small. The demand is great. But it is hoped some day Swamiji's vision will come true, and the West will be honeycombed with Sannyasins of our Mission. It is only the deeper truths of religion, as Swamiji has pointed out, that can bring harmony and understanding between the nations of the world. This harmony, this understanding, based on the divinity inherent in man, is the message Swami Vivekananda brought to the West.

HUMANITARIANISM IN FOOD AS THE BASIS OF HUMANITARIANISM IN LIFE

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.

Human life on this planet, so far as it has been revealed by history, has been one long steep ascent up the narrow path of love and service and purity and renunciation. The ascent has not been continuous. There have been many descents on the way. But the trial and the travail—nay, even more important than those, the passion and the urge in the direction of the ascent of love have been there and have been powerful and plastic influences moulding and directing and leading the life of man in its path of evolution.

Why is it that the ascent has not been continuous! Why have there been so many deflections and deviations? It seems to me that the real cause has been man's indiscipline in food. Many of us are apt to think that food is only the fuel of vitality and that there is no connection between it and our intellectual and moral and social and spiritual life. It was and is the great glory of Hinduism and its sister faiths in Eastern Asia i.e., Jainism and Buddhism that they realised and proclaimed this connection in certain and unequivocal terms. Here was proclaimed the true and pure doctrine and gospel of mercy. and here and here alone was it acted upon. Here and here alone was it realised that it is food that determines the nature of the mind. The Upanishad declares—*Annamayam hi soumya manah* (Child! the mind is verily the manifestation of the food). It declares again—*Ahara sud-dhau sattwasudhih sattwasuddhau dhruva smriti* (purity of mind is the resultant of purity of food, and certitude of intuition is the result of purity of mind). The *Bhagavad Gita* impresses on us the need of offering food to God in a mood of prayerful devotion and says that only then it is *Amritam* (nectar i.e., the means of spiritual realisation), and that otherwise it is only sin *Agham*, in the form of victuals. The *Gita* points out also that purity and measure in food are the only effective means of the attainment of *Yoga*. It tells us further what are the pure and the impure forms of nutrition. It is the non-realisation of this fundamental truth which has led to animalism in food which in its turn has led to animalism in life with its abundant crop of misery for men and races on this planet. He who seeks to build human goodness and international amity on the basis of non-humanitarianism in food builds on the most unstable and insecure of foundations.

In modern times the medical and sanitary sciences look more and more to the prevention of diseases than to their diagnosis and remedy, though these branches have received extraordinary attention and advancement. The new school of nature cure, especially, concentrates on health, eschews drugs, prescribes right food and right thinking, and insists on a natural life. It affirms the unity of disease as clearly as it affirms the unity of health. If you cleanse the body, the disease disappears. Mere sanitation, which means only cleanliness and fresh air and sunlight, is not enough by itself to save us from disease. It is right food which is the secret of a long and healthy and righteous life. It has been well said that "the blood is the life". But the quality of the life depends upon the purity of the blood which in its turn depends mostly upon the purity of the food. It has been said that beauty is "skin deep". But beauty depends really on right food and pure soul, and may hence be said to be really based on food and to be as deep as the soul.

That vegetarian food contains all the elements of nutrition and does not contain any predisposing causes to disease is the declaration of the best doctors and is the experience of countless generations. The organic salt contained in vegetables and fruits is easily assimilable while common salt is not. The vitamins are quite essential to life. They occur in abundance in green vegetables, butter, grains, milk, and fruits. Tinned foods lose them and are thus worthless in comparison with fresh food, as tinned foods are cooked at high temperatures and thus lose the vitamins in the process of such cooking. The glands secrete humours which affect largely the functions of the body. Iodine is required by the thyroid glands which govern the kidneys and the intestines and the life-process generally. Milk and green vegetables contain organic iodine and are excellent in their food values. The value of food depends not so much on the weight of proteids and carbohydrates and hydrocarbons therein as on the organic salts and the vitamins and the humours contained in them. Dr. Muthu has well pointed out how the mill-husked paddy is injurious to health and is without elements of real nutrition. In the same manner bleached sugar is another enemy of man, coffee, tea and other stimulants are equally enemies of life though not in the same degree as alcohol and nicotine.

Quite as important as right food is measure in food. Manu condemns gormandising in terms of strong denunciation. He says, "Excessive eating is the cause of disease. It shortens life. It bars the doors to heaven. It is opposed to the ethical life. It is condemned by the world. Therefore let it be given up altogether." A

well-regulated course of fasts is not only a means of holiness but is also a means of health as well.

Thus if we wish to have health and beauty and goodness, if our race is to be virile and longlived and pure, if we desire to realise God, we must learn the value of dietetics and take right foods in right ways and in right measure for right aims in life. Only on the basement of humanitarianism in food can be raised the palace of humanitarianism in life.

ANCIENT AND MODERN THINKING

By Charles Johnston

I

.....The knowledge that we inhabit, not this green earth alone, set in shining seas, but the wide universe, is a rightful part of the heritage of man. It should be continuous and universal, keeping us alert to our high destiny. Among all living things in the world, it belongs so far as we can judge, to man alone. Beasts and birds rejoice in the sun light. Migrant warblers and terns and golden plovers follow the sun northward and southward every spring and autumn, catching the light upon their wings. While the morning star yet shines, robins herald the dawn with magnificent choral song. Tigers and owls, stalking in darkness, pay an inverted tribute to the light. But none of them, save man alone, looks beyond this earth to the outer immensities. Beasts and birds inhabit the world. Only man inhabits the universe.

It would seem to be the same with the immensities of time. Man looks with forward and reverted eye, but beast and bird, even when instinct impels them to lay up store for the futuro, live wholly in the moment. The bird's whole consciousness goes into his present song. The animal that has just escaped from imminent death is in a few minutes serene and happy again, with even pulso and quiet heart. But man broods over past and future, even though this may make him neither happier nor wiser.

If we compare to-day with even the recent past, five or six centuries back, we shall realize that our conception both of time and of space has expanded immensely, almost infinitely. The general human mind has gained the consciousness which for a few minutes brooded over the surprised watchers of the eclipse. The universe we inhabit has opened out, backward and forward, upward and downward, to a degree almost inconceivable.

Not so long ago, time began for Western thought in the year 4004 B. C. I remember my astonishment when, as a boy, I came upon

an Egyptian statue, in a museum, bearing the date 4150 B. C. It seemed to stick out into the void, a century and a half before the universe came into being. And, not so long ago, space was as constricted as time. With so great a mystic as Dante, it is rash to think that we have sounded to the depths of his meaning; but, taken literally, the universe he describes is a little one, with earth looming large in the centre of a star-flecked shell, in whose narrow spaces sun and moon and little planets whirl, all of them vassals of our central world. The whole of time, for that small earth-centred universe, was limited to scant six thousand years, before which time was not, after which time should be no more. Today we think of the age of our earth alone as not less than a billion years, and we use proportionate measures for star-strewn space. A marvellous release of pent-up thought, a splendid expansion of the universe and of the intelligence which seeks to fathom it.

Yet this modern opening of the universe is not altogether a conquest of new territories. It was preceded by an equal shrinkage. The date 4004 B. C., for the beginning of things, seemed to Archbishop Ussher a logical and certain deduction from the chronology of the Hebrews, with their tradition of the Flood and the ages of the patriarchs. But the older peoples of the Orient thought in ampler periods, and it seems likely that the Hebrew patriarchs, even with their long life spans, are abbreviated copies of the antediluvian kings of Babylonia, and that these were not persons but periods. Solon, when he visited the Egyptian temples, was told that the history of Hellas went back, not a mere thousand years, but ten thousand; the Greeks, like children, had forgotten.

As with the constricted centuries, so also with the small, earth-centred world. Dante followed Ptolemy, who, in the second century of our era, made our earth the hub of the solar system. But, long before Ptolemy, Pythagoras and his disciples had taught that the earth swings free around an orbit with a distant centre, and they also taught the movement of the sun in space. Copernicus and Galileo were not altogether pioneers of a new way. The great Samian had already said, "Eppure si muove."

Iamblichus tells us that Pythagoras, like his mentor, Thales, had learned much in Egypt, where he spent more than twenty years, studying astronomy and geometry in the recesses of the temples and being initiated into the divine mysteries. He adds that, when Pythagoras was taken by the army of Cambyses to Babylon, he gladly studied with the Magi, perfecting himself in their sacred knowledge, as well as in numbers and music, during twelve years. So Pythagoras, who

framed the great word 'philosophy' for our Western world, was a debtor to the ancients. And quite recently it has been shown that the Babylonian astronomer Kidinnu knew of the precession of the equinox; Hipparchus, hitherto held to be its discoverer, really borrowed the teaching ready made. Since a single precession covers nearly twenty-six thousand years, it is clear that the Magi thought in immense periods of time.

II

So the small earth-centered world lasting but six millenniums is comparatively modern. It marked an eclipse of thought, a shrinkage from an ampler past. But while it lasted the reign of this shrunken world was absolute. It bound the human mind with a band of steel, as Galileo could testify. And it endured in our general thinking until the day before yesterday; it even endures to-day.

Archbishop Ussher's chronology held sway over Western thought when our pioneers went to India to delve into Sanskrit lore, a century and a half ago. So far as the immensities of past time were concerned, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, and their gifted fellow workers still wore the band of steel about their brows. Their thought and imagination were stereotyped in terms of 4004 B. C. for the beginning of all things. Ancient India was discovered too soon, before the key to the hieroglyphics and the chronology of Egypt had been found, before the long periods recorded on cuneiform tablets had been disclosed. So it unfortunately happened that the chronology of India was explored by men who thought only in terms of 4004 B. C. for the Creation, with the year 2349 B. C. punctiliously fixed for Noah's universal deluge. All post-diluvian history had to be crushed into that Procrustean frame. And the past of India was thus compressed by our unconscious disciples of Procrustes. Max Muller, who had a wholesome respect for Archbishop Ussher, accepted their conclusions, which overshadow all books dealing with India even to-day. So it happens that in an excellent book on India, just published, we are told that the Aryans entered India 'approximately in the year 2500 B. C.' Apart from Max Muller's fancy, there is no better evidence for that date than for 2349 B. C. as the date of a universal flood.

When our earliest Sanskritists began their invaluable work in India, they found in actual use an era, then approaching its five-thousandth year, which had its starting point in the year 3101 B. C.—the era of Kali Yuga, as it is called. It began, according to Indian tradition, at the end of the great war of the Mahabharata. Immediately, and quite inevitably, our scholars said: 'Impossible! Absurd! That is several centuries before the Flood!' So they set themselves to

'correct' this ridiculous error, and the chronology of India was telescoped from millenniums to centuries. If they had known something of the ancient history of Egypt and Babylonia, they would have been more cautious, less summary. Only the other day graves were unearthed at Ur of the Chaldees which were confidently assigned to the year 3100 B. C., and beneath them was another layer, many centuries earlier. No one then said, 'Impossible! Absurd! That would be before the Flood!' Yet it was exactly in that antediluvian mood that the foundations of our Western dates for India were laid, a century and a half since, when Warren Hastings was the great patron of Sanskrit learning. The docile followers of Archbishop Ussher were still unconsciously conspiring to dwarf the world in time, just as Galileo's judges contracted the universe in space. Indian chronology suffered a detriment which has not yet been repaired.

The wise men of India looked back, not to a few centuries of past history, but to many millenniums. And they also steadily contemplated epochs of man's existence, and of the world's, to be reckoned, not by thousands, but by many millions of years. The universe, for them, was beginningless in time, and infinite in extent.

And they had for their large calculations an admirable instrument which the West has only recently borrowed from them. We speak of the Arabic figures which displaced the clumsy reckoning of the Romans. They are not really Arabic, but Indian, and it seems likely that they were adapted from the initial letters of the Sanskrit numerals. To show the immense intellectual reach of these ancient Aryans, it is well worth while to cite their conception of the larger numbers, as they are set forth, for example, in the Buddhist scripture called *Abhidhamma*. The first large number is called a *laksha*, a hundred thousand; the modern form is *lakh* or *lac* and the treasury of British India still reckons in lacs of rupees. Then followed a *koti*, ten millions, modernized as a crore. But this is only the beginning. From the *koti* upward, each succeeding numeral is ten million times the preceding; they are, in fact, the square, the cube, and the higher powers of the crore. For these ascending numbers there are definite names up to the twentieth power of ten millions, or one followed by one hundred and forty ciphers. There is nothing constricted about that. It would be entirely easy to express either in Sanskrit or in Pali the vast distances of our modern astronomers; to translate the hundred million light years with which we measure the width of space, and to express the result in miles, or even in inches. We should still have a sheaf of numerals left unused.

Nor were these huge numbers mere playthings of the Aryan mathematicians. They were measuring sticks for their conceptions

both of time and of space. To begin with, they assigned to the antiquity of man a period so immense that even the Western science, a few short decades back, would have dismissed it as ridiculous and absurd, exactly as our early Sanskritists dismissed the very modest date, 3101 B. C., for the close of the Mahabharata war.

But our anthropologists are gaining courage. A dozen years ago Sir Arthur Keith ended his fine work on man's antiquity by saying that he knew of no facts which made impossible the existence of man in the Miocene Period. This would take us back not less than four or five million years. Only a few months back Henry Fairfield Osborn said that the prologue of human life must be sought even earlier, in the Oligocene, which preceded the Miocene, and he fixed that time as sixteen million years ago.

This in itself is sufficiently striking, and it involves a remarkable coincidence, for, some forty or fifty years back, certain of the Brahman computations were published in India which gave to our present mankind an antiquity of over eighteen million years. Forty or fifty years ago even our most liberal-minded anthropologists would have called this absurd and ridiculous. Only in 1927 have we ventured to approach the traditional Aryan figures for the immense antiquity of man.

We have our series of geological ages, Archaeozoic, Palaeozoic, Mesozoic, Cenozoic—often sub-divided into groups of four. It is interesting to note that ancient India had a somewhat similar system, consisting of Kalpas and Yugas, and also divided four-fold. Thus the Yugas are arranged in a series of four, in the proportion of one, two, three, four. This group makes a total of 4,320,000 years, called a great Yuga. But this is only the beginning. For two thousand of these great Yugas are needed to make up a Kalpa, which is thus a period of 8,640,000,000 years. This immense period of nearly nine billion years is but one day and night of the formative Power, whose life time—one cosmic period, consists of a hundred years of such days and nights. So the ancient Aryans had plenty of scope for their big numerals.

It is difficult to say whether these Aryan periods are based on geological or on astronomical thinking, but there is at least a suggestion that they are the former. The ancient Aryans spoke of a succession of Avatars, or 'Descents of Life'. So we have the fish-descent, the tortoise-descent, the man-lion-descent, and then the human incarnations. And this succession immediately suggests the age of fish, the age of reptiles, the age of mammals, and the age of man.

But we need not lay too much stress on the details. It is enough for us to realize that only in the last few decades has Western thought

approached the vast reach of ancient Aryan thought. For our early Orientalists, in the days of Warren Hastings, these long periods were simply unthinkable and meaningless. So they blandly discarded them and made up, for India, a chronology more in harmony with the civilized views of Archbishop Ussher.

III

.....We are interested, not so much in the details, but in the general conception. In the Buddhist scripture, the teaching is attributed to Buddha himself. This would make it at least twenty-five centuries old, long antedating the small, constricted universe of Ptolemy. And in this scripture there is a notable phrase which brings out with singular force and clearness the largeness of these ancient conceptions. That phrase is 'one hundred thousand times ten million worlds'—or, to express it in our figures, 1,000,000,000,000 worlds.

How did the ancient Aryans arrive at this figure? By gazing into the skies on a clear, moonless night? But our books on astronomy tell us that, on the clearest nights, only some five thousand stars are distinguishable by the naked eye. Perhaps, in the deserts of Egypt or Arabia, primitive stargazers might make out twice as many. And it is worth remembering that in those low latitudes nearly the whole of the stellar sphere is visible night after night. The sun descends almost vertically in the west. Within an hour it is nearly dark, and in the east stars are already visible. The great star-dotted shell above turns on its axis, so that an hour before sunrise it has almost completely revealed a new hemisphere of stars, from one stellar pole to the other. But even this admirable opportunity for observation will reveal, at the most, only ten thousand visible stars. From this to the million million worlds which we have quoted, there is an unbridged chasm. It may be said that the Milky Way, like a golden sash about the sphere, reveals millions upon millions of worlds. But how did these ancient observers know that that faint 'band of luminous cloud was made up of worlds? How did they anticipate, perhaps by two millenniums, our modern observations, to be made only with immense telescopes? 'The stars are large,' says the Mahabharata, 'though they appear so small in consequence of their distance.' Heraclides almost echoed this when he said, 'Each star is a world.'

So that, as regards both the immensities of time and the immensities of space, our newest conceptions are rather reconquests than a winning of fresh territories from the unknown. The small, earth-centred universe, lasting in all six thousand years, was but an interlude, a temporary shrinkage of the vast conceptions of the past. The

constricted universe has vanished, but it lasted long enough, at least so far as time was concerned, to go with our first Orientalists to India. And even in those days the ban of the Index still lay on the heliocentric system. The simple truth is that, because of the stereotyped narrowness of their thinking, our first Orientalists were utterly unable to appraise, or even to grasp, the grand conceptions they encountered. So they said, 'Absurd! Ridiculous!' Only now, a century and a half later, have we Westerns thought ourselves up to the point where we can understand what the Aryans were thinking at least two millenniums back, and perhaps millenniums earlier. Only in the spring of 1927 have our anthropologists ventured all to name, for the antiquity of man, a period nearly equal to that of the Brahmanical computations.

IV

If, then, these old Aryan thinkers were so far ahead, when the West discovered them, as to be unintelligible, so that a century and a half were needed before we could attain to conceptions of a like immensity; if they had thought to such good purpose thousands of years ago, is it not worth while to ask whether other departments of their thinking, as recorded in their ancient books, may not contain treasures of wisdom for us, elements of thought that are still in advance of the point we have attained?

There is at least one such conception, which we may call, 'the continuity of consciousness,' a parallel, on the spiritual side, of the conservation of energy. And one may say that, for the whole realm of consciousness and all that concerns it. Western thinking still seems rather vague. Our biologists and geologists face the perpetual puzzle of the beginning of life on our small globe. One of them, in his mental distress, has even suggested that life made the voyage hither with a colony of microbes riding on a meteor. But, if this were true, it would only postpone the difficulty, to be raised again for the putative port of departure of that meteor. But the ancient Aryans solved the problem magisterially. Life, they said, had no beginning. It has been from everlasting, inherent in Being itself; only the successive vestures of life, the forms of matter which make life manifest, have a beginning and an end. So with consciousness. Consciousness, in a latent form still inconceivable for us, is from everlasting, as it is infinite in its expanse. Only the vestures it wears have their beginning and their end. Here, say the ancient Aryans, is our way of salvation, of immortality: to make ourselves progressively more like in nature to the primal consciousness, whose inherent nature is eternity, wisdom, joy. Goodness is thus a form of wisdom, a wise

conforming of our acts and thoughts to the Real of the real, as the fine phrase of the Upanishads goes.

Certain sides of this wide view of consciousness may be suggested. First, the eternity of consciousness. Clearly it is not the personal consciousness of our present bodies that is everlasting, but the greater primal consciousness, the boundless deep from which we drew out at birth, and whither we are to turn again home. Nevertheless, even in our personal consciousness, there is the seed, the intuition, of eternity. And it is precisely this living intuition that sends the intellect forth, to plumb the vast depths of geological time, and also to look forward to like aeons in the future. The materialistic geologist finds the source both of life and of our consciousness in a pin point of protoplasm, a blend of chemicals, each a pattern of electrons. How can a pinch of carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen have the intuition of eternity, unless, as we are quite willing to admit, they also have the germ of consciousness, some small spark of the primal consciousness? It is, then, this eternalness inherent in all consciousness that sets us to measure the vast darkness of the past. What else could make us believe in the past? In perfect strictness, it is always to-day, always 'now.' The geologist, standing before a cliff built up of successive layers of limestone, sees the whole in to-day, in the present moment. But the divine intelligence in him translates that 'now' into tens or hundreds of thousands of years, seeing in the successive layers the record of an ocean at work for ages, piling up the bodies of small sea lives. It is really a tremendous transformation, which converts the present cliff face into almost endless ages of past time, and it is the pressure of the eternal in his consciousness that constrains him to do this, even though he may believe himself a sheer materialist. The cliff swallow that constructs his gourd-shaped home of clay on the face of the rock lives wholly in to-day, in each moment. For him it is always here and now. The hour has not yet struck for his consciousness to make the great projection into the past, into the future. There is, in geology, something bigger than geologists. Geology is the true science of the immensities of time.

Another thing is not less notable. No single geologist can see with his own eyes and competently examine more than a few patches of the earth with its rock garments. The fossils of a single period are a life-study for any man who would know them well. Yet geology is not a congeries of patches. It is a consistent whole. The consciousness of each geologist dovetails into the consciousness of all other geologists, not by a happy accident, but because the primal consciousness underlies them all. So with every science. Its true home is not in

books, nor in laboratories, but in consciousness ; not the consciousness of one man, but the larger general consciousness, from which all flow, and into which all may enter. Without consciousness, there might conceivably be rocks and fossils, but there would be no geology. This, like all sciences, dwells in consciousness, and lives only in consciousness.

And the impulse of order in consciousness is as imperative as the impulse to swing backward into the unfathomed past. When the geologists came upon the rocks, what was their first impulse? What have they been doing ever since? Discerning the dominion of order, the long unrolling of causal forces, which have built up the vesture of our world. Once more, whence comes the impulsion? Surely from the very nature of consciousness, in which law and order are inherent, have been inherent from everlasting. If these were not in consciousness, how could we find them elsewhere? How should we ever set forth to seek them or recognize them when found?

So with astronomy, the science of the immensities of space, as geology is the science of the immensities of time. When our astronomers eagerly await the hours of darkness, in order that they may peer forth into the depths among the stars, they are obeying like a imperative power of consciousness, which claims its kinship with infinities. Once again they seek and find, even in the farthest nebula, a unity of law, a unity of substance, which are inherent in consciousness itself.

So we have regained in part our ancient heritage, the intuition of infinite space, of boundless time. We also may recover, if we will, that other intuition, even more vital, of the continuity of consciousness, which in its own nature is eternity, wisdom, joy. So we shall begin to inhabit the universe.—*Extracted from "The Atlantic Monthly," Boston, U. S. A.*

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

The New Civilization : by Annie Besant, D. Lit; published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

Dr. Annie Besant has laid the world under a debt of obligation by allowing the four lectures she delivered at the Queen's Hall, London, in June 1927, to be published in a book form under the title "New Civilization." Her handling of the subject, it is needless to say, is masterly in that she having surveyed the forces that have given birth to the present civilization and explained the character of the various departments of human life all the world over, has indicated

the line on which all especially the educated and intelligent men, thinkers and philosophers, should direct their activity to make the coming New Civilization redound to their credit. The lectures are full of deep erudition based as they are upon a wide knowledge of the history of Nations of the world and specially upon her knowledge of the economic and humane conditions prevalent in the United States of America which she had ample opportunity of studying during her recent sojourn in that land—the land where poverty is conspicuous by its absence among the nature-born Americans. The thought-provoking ideas which are strongly set forth in her lectures on "Education in the New Civilization" and on "Economics of the New Civilization" which appear just at the end of her book deserve to be read and re-read by all those who wish the welfare of humanity at large. Whatever may be the misgivings which the reader may entertain regarding the formation of a sub-race in which the New Civilization which will be one "of practical Brotherhand, of love to all the nations of the earth" is expected to have its embodiment and however utopian the reader may consider the experiment which the Theosophical Society is going to carry on in California to help in the formation of this sub-race or in the engendering of the New Civilization, there can be no doubt that many a reader of this interesting and instructive book will be influenced to not a little extent to look ahead of his time, and shape and mould not only his life but also that of others with whom he may come in contact in such a way as to deserve the appellation of a good citizen. This itself, we think, will be a sufficient reward for Dr. Besant's labours.

Little Essays in the Philosophy and Religion of Vedant or Vedant for the West : by Ganesh Prasad Gupta, Govt. Pensioner, Indian Army Service Corps, Lucknow, Husainganj (Barber Lane). Price 6 as.

This is a collection of 7 papers written by the author on the following subjects :—"The Problem of Free Will," "The Problem of the First Person," "The Truth about Happiness," "The Truth about Progress," "The Truth about Goodness," "Evolution and Destiny of Life", "Vedant and Mysticism." The subjects dealt with being abstruse and the papers written being short, the author's thoughts which have necessarily been condensed and couched in a terse language can at best be followed only by those who have had tolerably a good knowledge of the philosophies of the East and the West.

While it may be said to the credit of the author that the Essays are thought-provoking we would venture to observe that his idea of

the Absolute that it is the "Unchanging and Inert Witness," of the Turiya condition that it may "give a better and clearer manifestation of an ultra-mental sleep" than sleep but it can give no better proof of the unreality of the world, of mukti that "it is not even necessarily the cessation of the cycle of births and deaths," appears to be the outcome of a mind inebriated with Western Science and leaning too much towards ratiocination which alone will not enable a man to have either a direct experience of the Truth or enter into the Spirit of Hindu mysticism except through *Swambhudi* or right living. The Absolute, be it remembered, is not all-inertness but all-consciousness, all-sentience; Turiya is not "ultra-mental Sleep" but intense activity finding its culmination in the union of the individual self with the Universal Self or Paramatman, and Mukti is not simply "a mental attitude of Self-hood" but is a state of ineffable joy in which desires of all kinds are completely extinct, the pairs of opposites are conspicuous by their absence and the seed for rebirth if it exists at all is bereft of all its virility.

As the papers are chiefly meant for the West, it is a pity that the author has not been able to present to them a more correct exposition of the Hindu view on the subjects dealt with.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The *Prathista* or Installation ceremony of The Ramakrishna Ashrama at Salem was performed by Srimat Swami Nirmalananda, President of The Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bangalore on Wednesday, the 14th November, 1928. The ceremony began with Pooja and Bhajana between 7 & 10 A. M., in the presence of a large assembly of ladies and gentlemen. After this was over the feeding of the poor who numbered about 2000 men, women and children took place at noon. There was again a meeting of the public at the Ashrama in the afternoon at 5 P. M. when lectures were delivered on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva; one lecture in Tamil by Swami Chitbhavananda and another in English by Swami Yatiswarananda, which made a deep impression on the audience. Then Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer who was once such a prominent figure in the public life of the Madras Presidency and who is now leading a quiet retired life explained the circumstances which led to the establishment of the present Ashrama at Salem, the liberal and catholic spirit in which the Ramakrishna Ashramas are conducted and the responsibility of the Salem public to maintain and develop the work of the Ashrama. The proceedings came to a close with a few

remarks of Srimat. Swami Nirmalananda, who thanked all who helped in bringing the Ashrama into existence and who kindly responded to his invitation to attend the ceremony and wished them all happiness and prosperity. Under the auspices of the Ashrama Swami Yatiswarananda spoke on the Essentials of Hinduism in English, and Swami Chitbhavananda on the Ideal of Life in Tamil in the Municipal College Hall on the 17th and 18th November respectively.

The Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore, which was opened in 1925 has been feeling the need of a building of its own for the continuance and extension of its activities. The City Improvement Trust Board readily offered an extensive site in Vani Vilas Mohalla. A building committee with Dharmaprakasa D. Banumiah as President was formed in July last and the foundation-stone of the Ashrama was laid on Monday, 19th Nov. 1928 by Swami Sharvanandaji. Prominent amongst those present on that occasion were Rajasilpivisarada B. Subba Rao, Arthasastravisarada Dr. R. Shama Sastry, Messrs. T. S. Ali Khan, K. Dhanakoti Chetty, Prof. K. B. Madhawa, Viswanath Korge, Executive Engineer, B. Venkataramaiah, Palace contractor H. C. Dasappa, M.L.C., V. Subramania Iyer, Retired Registrar, Mysore University, M. Puttiaba, B.A., B.L., A. Vasudeva Rao of the Boy Scouts of Mysore and N. Narasimha Murty, Librarian, Mysore University, and many others. The members of the Ramakrishna Bhakta Mandal, an Association of the students of the City, did excellent volunteer service in arranging the function. An elaborate Pooja and Homa was performed, and thereafter at about 11-30 A.M., the foundation stone was laid by the Swami. After the close of the auspicious ceremony and the distribution of Prasadam the gathering dispersed.

GITA-DAY IN MADRAS

The Gita Day was for the first time celebrated in South India on Sunday the 23rd of December, 1928 in Madras under the auspices of the Sanskrit Academy. The function took place at the Madras Sanskrit College with Mr. V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar in the chair. After Puja and Prayer, several distinguished speakers of this locality delivered impressive speeches in Sanskrit, English and Tamil on the essentials of the Bhagavad Gita. The President in course of his address remarked that whereas the Bhagavad Gita was known only to a few Pundits about three or four decades back, now-a-days it was perhaps the most popular book in the country. This, in the Chairman's opinion, indicated the spiritual revival that was taking place in the land. With a vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting terminated. A special feature of the function was the Competitive Recitation of the whole of the Bhagavad Gita, open to the students of all the local

schools and colleges. But only the boys of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, took part in the competition and monopolised all the prizes, which called forth from the President the remark that, of all the institutions here, it was the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, that was run on truly national lines.

The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, has sent the following abstract of account of the R. K. Mission Famine Relief Work in Bankura and Balurghat: Receipts: Donations Rs. 24,874-5-0. Sale proceeds Rs. 296-13-3. Total Rs. 25,171-2-3. Payments: Rice for recipients Rs. 17,880-4-6. Salt Rs. 36-12-0. Cloths Rs. 651-6-0. Sacks Rs. 91-3-9. Transit charges (freight, cart, boat, cooly, etc.) Rs. 976-8-9. Travelling and inspection charges Rs. 552-15-6. Equipment (trunks, utensils, lanterns, curtains, bykes, etc.) Rs. 569-12-6. Establishment (lighting, salary, etc.) Rs. 343-3-9. Stationery Rs. 81-7-0. Postage, telegram, m. o. commission, etc. Rs. 131-8-6. Printing charges Rs. 23-4-0. Miscellaneous Rs. 19-14-6. Pecuniary help Rs. 219-0-0. Medical relief Rs. 34-4-6. Workers' expense (food, clothes, shoes, umbrellas, medicines, etc.) Rs. 569-12-6. (for 22 workers). Total Rs. 21,786-10-6. Balance Rs. 3,384-7-9. deposited to the Provident Relief Fund of the Mission.

The Annual Report of the R. K. Mission Ashrama, Baranagore, 24 Perganas, for the year 1927 is to our hand. The Ashrama conducted with success an Orphanage of 21 (twenty-one) boys. In addition to their general education in the Local High and Middle schools, the boys received a regular course of training in spinning, cane-work, carpentry and tailoring at the Ashrama during the year under review. The workers rendered medical aid to the sick and the helpless people of the locality in their respective homes. In the attached Outdoor Dispensary of the Ashrama altogether 3,970 patients received free Medical treatment in the year. Moreover, poor, helpless and needy widows of the place were the recipients of monthly and occasional gifts of rice from the Ashrama for their maintenance. The Ashrama secured a plot of land for the erection of a permanent house of its own thereon; and the cost of the proposed building was estimated at Rs. 3,5000 against which Rs. 4,462 had already been subscribed. The Secretary of the Ashrama appeals for funds to the generous public. The contribution in any form, however small, will be thankfully acknowledged.

The Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Gujrat Flood Relief Work shows a good record of philanthropic service rendered to the flood-affected areas by the workers of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay and Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Gujrat. The relief-work extended over a period of seven months from August, 1927

to February, 1928. The devastating floods, in Gujrat and Kathiawad in July, 1927 rendered thousands of people homeless and absolutely stranded in life. The relief party had to work over an extensive area of about 600 sq. miles comprising 120 villages through the five centres,—Tarapur, Indernaj, Sayama, Golana and Cambay. In all 4,366 persons of 1953 families were helped with corn, cash and clothes as shown below:—Corn—774 mds. 23 seers. Seeds—143 mds. 20 seers. Corn (given as Tagavi)—1,343 mds. 30 seers. Clothes—10,763 pieces. Cotton blankets—230. Warm blankets—450. Houses built—920. The total receipts were Rs. 56,173-4-10 and the total expenditure was Rs. 48,820-15-7 leaving a balance of Rs. 7,352-5-3 which is deposited with the Bank of India, Bombay, for future emergencies.

A brief outline of the work of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Khar, Bombay, for the year 1927 is appended at the end of the Report of the R. K. Mission Gujrat Flood Relief Work. Regular scripture classes were conducted by Swami Viswananda and Swami Sambuddhananda at the Ashrama, Gamdevi, Matunga, Parel, Santra Cruz and Borvil. Swami Viswananda delivered a series of lectures in Bombay, Calcutta and Patna and Swami Sambuddhananda at Ahmedabad and Rajkot during the year, which were highly appreciated by the public. The Primary School and the Charitable Dispensary went on their normal course and the Birthday Anniversaries of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated. Feeding of the poor Narayanas formed an important feature of these celebrations. The main activity of the Ashrama during the year was the Flood Relief in Gujrat. The starting of a Students' Home and Industrial Home was under contemplation and the Committee decided to purchase about 6,000 sq. yards of land adjacent to the premises. The cost of this additional land including earth-filling was estimated at Rs. 20,000 against which a sum of Rs. 5,000 had already been contributed by a generous Parsee friend. The Committee appeals to the public of Bombay and elsewhere to make up the deficit and conveys sincere thanks to all for their sympathy and co-operation extended in all its activities.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

ॐ

न देहं न प्राणान्न च सुखमशेषाभिलषितं
न चात्मानं नान्यत् किमपि तव शेषत्वविभवात् ।
बहिर्भूतं नायं क्षणमपि सहे यातु शतधा
विनाशं तत् सत्यं मधुमयत्रयं विज्ञापनामिदं ॥
दुरन्तस्यानादेरपरिहरणीयस्य महतो
निहीनात्वारोऽहं वृषशुभस्यास्पदमपि ।
दयासिन्धो बन्धो निरवधिक्रवात्सल्यजलधे
तव स्मरं स्मरं गुणगुणमितीच्छामि गतभीः ॥

My Lord, I do not want the comfort of body ; nor long life ; nor enjoyments, so much hankered after by all ; nor even the knowledge of the Self ; I do not want anything even for a single moment. Let them all go in thousand ways ! But verily, do I want the blessed treasure of servitude, eternal to Thee !

My Friend, Thou boundless ocean of compassion and love divine, I am the seat of infinite evils—evils that are difficult to be crossed over, beginningless and irresistible ; I am devoid of all moral disciplines ; a beast among men ; but, my Lord, remembering the infinitude of Thy mercy over and over again, I do become fearless ; so I dare place this humble prayer in submission to Thee !

YAMUNACHARYA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(*To a devotee*)

Swami : Do you perform any prayer and meditation now ?

Devotee : No sir, nothing at all.

S. : But it is better to do a little every day. That shall give you peace of mind and steadiness. I am sure you have your family preceptor ; why did you not then take initiation so long ? You had better receive it from him by this time. However, every day you should perform a little of Japam and meditation. Purchase a rosary of Rudraksha ; bathe it in the holy waters of the Ganges and touch the sacred Feet of Lord Viswanath with it, and then perform Japam with that for a hundred and eight or a thousand times daily. And if you like to do more, you can safely do so ; and you should.

D. : What shall I repeat in Japan, sir ?

S. : Why, the blessed name of the Lord ! Out of His various names that which inspires greater faith and greater devotion in you,—that very name shall you choose for the purpose of performing Japam !

D. : Again, without a form meditation is not possible ; now, what form shall I meditate upon, and where ?

S. : Like Japam you shall meditate upon one of the many forms of Him you like best ; and that you can do right in the heart or outside of it. An expert preceptor, however, can understand the particular form of God that commands greater faith and regard from the disciple, and accordingly instructs him to meditate on that ; that is to say, what one likes best.

Then there is again mental worship. As you do external worship with offerings of flowers, sandal paste, burning

of camphor, etc., exactly so is the worship in the mind. Therein, in mind you have to picture the Deity you choose, in mind are you to offer all sacred things of worship and in mind again to adore Him with all the reverence and devotion of your heart and in humble supplication. You have heard enough; now do something in practice and show the worthiness of yourself. No more waste of time; begin from this day—this very evening. For the present do these two things: Japam and meditation every morning and evening without fail; and continue this habit for a couple of years at least. Then shall you find great joy; then shall you come to us more frequently, and shall know more and more of spiritual mysteries. Now this much and no further. Hereafter I shall tell you just in time what more practices are you to undergo in the future. Now you need not bother yourself for the mental worship; leave it off at present. After your formal initiation, if I think you should do this, then and then alone shall I ask you to do it. And regarding initiation itself, you need not worry over that at this stage. Now only do this much as instructed, and nothing more. No more wasting of time, my child, begin this very day, and proceed on and on.

Procure a new Asanam or blanket to sit upon, and keep it separate to be used solely for meditation, worship and work of kindred nature. Also choose a solitary retreat for carrying on your meditation and Sadhana; your garden house, I suppose, stands in a very lonely place. If you feel inconvenient or disturbed at home, now and then you can better retire there at night. Mind, here in this sacred city of Kashi, spiritual realisation is so easily attainable. If you can carry on your Sadhana for two years at a stretch, I am sure, you shall have some sort of realisation at least. Some have attained still earlier—in a year even. So begin now, and after the lapse of some time you shall feel so much joy at heart that you shall not like to leave off your Sadhana—always feeling inclined to meditate more and more.

In your meditation you must sit erect and cross-legged, and hold your hands near your chest or the upper abdomen. And frequent the place of the holy, study sacred books occasionally, and come to me now and then. And do not begin your meditation immediately after taking your Asanam, sit silently for a couple of minutes or so and try to make the mind 'blank,' so that no other foreign thoughts may cross there; and then only meditation is to be begun in right earnest. In the beginning for a year or two, you are to exert the strength of your mind; thereafter it shall become natural with you. If any day you are hard pressed with work, that day you may sit for meditation only once, or may finish it in a few minutes, say, in ten or fifteen minutes; again in the case of greater inconvenience remember Him once for a moment and then make a salutation to Him. In such a case that will do; but not always.

Before your morning service, cleanse your hands and face and dress yourself in clean washed cloths, and sit for your practices. You may also take a little of the sacred Ganges water. In the evening also, the same routine has to be followed. I assure you once more, if you do these things regularly, you shall enjoy great peace of mind and shall live quite joyfully. Regarding morality now observe these two rules only: speak the truth always, and honour and worship all women as one's mother. Nothing more are you to be troubled with now. The observance of these two moral codes shall make all other moral rules live and follow in your life as a matter of consequence. And ever believe in the existence of God, and never say He is not. I tell unto you, my child, God is. Therefore hold fast to Him in sincere devotion and in lowliness of spirit and pray and pray! No more speculations, no more waste of time, no more idleness; do begin now, this very day and advance on and on; and I will see to the rest.

SHAKTI-WORSHIP AND INDIAN WOMANHOOD

Nature has furnished every race with an abundant supply of materials for its healthy growth and expansion ; and the proper utilisation of these multifold gifts is the *sine qua non* of the consummation of its living ideals. It is the standing testimony of history that Nature throws away whomsoever she finds delinquent in satisfactorily playing the parts assigned to them. The deep-seated instincts of a race can hardly find a spontaneous expression unless they are fed and kept alive by an unceasing stream of activity. But when the spirit of dynamism is gone and it makes room for a life of slavish imitation, the vitality of the people for self-expression and development is indeed stifled, and, what is worse, the nation is thrust into the background to drag a miserable existence in the society of Powers. The more we address ourselves to the task of taking stock of the world-situation and, especially, of the assets and liabilities of our national life, the more painfully do we become conscious of our helplessness in the various fields of our activity. The lurid picture of Indian life stands in sad contrast with the bright and iridescent life-history of the rest of humanity. So it has justly been remarked : " We talk vaingloriously of our immortal civilisation ; but what does it consist of to-day so far as the common people are concerned ? Our religion is one of the kitchen, of what to touch and what not to touch ; of baths and top-knots, of all manner of marks and fasts, and ceremonies that have lost all meaning ; our very gods are manufactured in the factories of England and Japan ! Our artistic cravings are satisfied with hideous prints from Germany ; our literature largely consists of sentimental and soppy effusions ; in our thought there is little new, we merely repeat and paraphrase and expound 'ad nauseam' what was said ages ago or else we denounce it equally irrationally." In fact we have become strangers to the indigenous cultural ideal in the very land of our birth ; and it would not be an idle inference to observe that, in our anxious craving for a new idealism, we have indiscriminately thrown away many of the sacred treasures of our life, and have thereby stifled the spontaneous growth of our national organism. Blind deification of modern materialism and an insistent striving for the

severance of our present life altogether from its ancient moorings have become the order of the day ; and the zealous ' reformers ' of the land do not even pause to consider what value attaches to such a hybrid culture that has no moral sanction in the accumulated wisdom of the race. They moreover forget that India was great not on account of any cultural inspiration imported from without, but because of her steadfast adherence to the sacred ideal evolved and placed before humanity by the seers of the past. It is not gainsaid that the cultures of the outside world have values of their own, and cannot altogether be tabooed in the scheme of our national evolution ; but what stinks in our nostrils is the blind and slavish imitation of outlandish practices that have, of late, found a right royal reception in the arena of our life and have created an unhealthy atmosphere in the country.

India is faced to-day with too many complicated problems, and to accentuate the one aspect of such problems to the negation of the other is indeed an impossibility in view of their equal demand for prompt solution. The growing tendency of the present progressivists has, to our misfortune, gravitated abnormally toward the modernisation of our social outlook in the light of Occidental social polity. One lamentable feature of this tendency is now noticeable in their active effort to lower down the sacred ideal of Indian womanhood, and to place it in step with that of the ' progressive ' West. In their enthusiasm for reform and for the safeguard of woman's rights, they have gone to the length of invading the sanctity of domestic life and have totally blinked at the sacred idealism that has moulded our social destiny from time immemorial. Fascination for westernism has moreover blinded them to the fact that it was the distinct privilege of the Indian Rishi of old to look upon women as the veritable embodiments of Mother Divine; for, women in their eyes, were but emanations of the Eternal Being realised as Mother. This is the idea that has crystallised into a living principle in the philosophy of our life, and has become inextricably associated with the womanhood in India. The idea of the Motherhood of God is as old as creation itself, and this conception is one of the splendid contributions of the Indian sages to the world of philosophical thoughts ; for it is in India that this idea reached its

highest culmination in long past years when many other races of the outside world were either not born at all, or rocking in the cradle of an infant culture, or were just stepping out into the light of a civilised life. It is, in short, the Indian seers who visualised in their spiritual ecstasy the manifestation of the Divine Mother in the person of a woman, and the idea of sanctity that attaches to the name of a woman is a living reality, that has ever since determined all our dealings and attitude towards the womanhood of the world at large.

It is now an accepted theological belief that 'all our conceptions of God begin first with anthropomorphism and finally end with de-anthropomorphism'. The Hindu philosophy posits that the ultimate Reality is the Brahman—the Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute, and the Divine Energy with all the phenomenal forces lying dormant in it rests on the bosom of that ocean of Absolute Being in a potential form before the beginning of cosmic evolution. In fact this Impersonal Being is the Personal on account of that manifested energy and has assumed various forms in response, as it were, to spiritual needs of the different classes of human mind. So did the Sruti sing : एकं सद्ब्रिग बहुधाः वदन्ति "That which exists is one; sages call it by various names." And far back from out of those dim centuries comes the hushed whisper of the Indian sages : "Look closer brother ! They are not even two, but one ! The One Existence is known as Purusha and Prakriti—Soul and Energy, in its undifferentiated and static aspect and the manifested kinetic form respectively." The findings of science are also on all fours with the conclusions of our philosophical thought; for, according to science the universe was in a potential state in that cosmic energy, and gradually through a process of evolution the whole potentiality has become kinetic or actual. In short this eternal energy is called the Mother of the universe and worshipped on earth under various names and forms. The Vedas are indeed the first recorded history of the revelation of the ultimate verity of existence, and it is in those sacred lores that we meet with a glimpse of the reality realised and worshipped as Mother. So runs the Devi Sukta in the Rig Veda : अहम् राट्रो सङ्गमनी वसूनाम् चिकितुषी प्रयमा यज्ञियायनाम् । "I am the Ruler of the universe and the bestower of wealth. To me Brahman is known as my Self

and I am the foremost among those to whom offerings should be made." The Upanishads, the Samhitas, the Puranas and the Tantras,—all sing in the same strain the ubiquity of the Mother—the creatrix of the universe and the ultimate solace and refuge of all humanity. Night in and night out, day in and day out, did the sages of old pass their life in holy communion with the Omnipotent Mother, and the secrets of the universe were revealed to their vision. India embodies this Power-Reality, and she wants to-day a rehabilitation of this sacred ideal of Shakti-worship to infuse new vitality into the millions of her drooping souls and spiritualise all relations between men and women in and outside India.

India, as already remarked, has forgotten the lofty ideal of the Mother-worship and has consequently lost every respect for her womanhood. The pristine virility and robust patriotism that nerved the Indians to lion's courage have almost sunk into a vague tradition of the past. And it is indeed painful to see that in recent years there has been an organised attempt in some 'reformed' quarters to knock down to the dust the sacred ideal of Indian womanhood, and thereby to break the very plank on which the mighty fabric of our society stands. It is not an exaggeration to say that this studied ignorance of the cohesive forces that maintain the solidarity and sanctity of our social life has been one of the contributory causes of our national debacle. This is the land where humanity has first begun to look upon women as the earthly representatives of the Divine Energy; and this is the land where scriptures still proclaim:—
विद्या समस्तास्तत्र देवि मेदाः स्त्रियः समस्ताः सकला जगत्सु ॥

"The Vedas and women of this world, O Mother, are but Thy manifested forms." It is in India that the scriptures have condemned in thousand and one voice the land where women are not respected and honoured. So says the Manu Samhita:—

यत्र नार्थस्तु पूज्यन्ते नन्दन्ते सर्वदेवताः । यत्रै तास्तुन पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफला क्रियाः ॥

"The gods are pleased where women are worshipped and venerated, and all the activities of the land where they are not duly honoured fail to produce their desired result." This is the exalted position the Indian women have ever occupied in the

comprehensive scheme of our social life. Even in their veneration for womanhood, the Shastras have mentioned with unfailing uniformity the name of a woman first whenever there was any occasion to allude to a compound name of a male and a female. The illustrious lives of Sita and Savitri, Droupadi and Damayanti, Gargi and Maitreyi, Padmini and Ahalya Bai, Durgavati and Lakshmi Bai furnish beautiful examples of what a glorious part each of them played in the moulding of human character and in the evolution of the lofty social ideal of the Hindus. Time was when in the West the very appearance and existence of woman on earth was considered to depend upon a man's rib. In India, on the other hand, every woman, like every man, has ever been regarded as the embodiment of infinite energy and entitled to spiritual liberation without even the ministration of any extraneous agency. Dr. A. C. Das of the Calcutta University points out in his *Rig Vedic Culture* that the influence of women in domestic, social and political matters were such as to bring forth vigorous progeny; that ladies could also become Rishis like men; and Ghosa, Lopamudra and Viswavara composed Vedic hymns. The last performed the duties of a 'Hotri' also at a sacrifice. The possibilities of a woman's life in short are as infinite and various as those of a man, and her contributions to the spiritual world have been as substantial and glorious as those of any man on the face of the earth.

In a recent speech Mr. Jaykar, the President of the All-India Social Conference pertinently remarked: "The student of the Vedic period finds scattered from place to place evidence that women occupied a very elevated place in the society of those days.....Even marriage does not appear to have been compulsory in those days, and women could remain unmarried either for the whole of their life or at least up to a very late age, devoting their time to learning and philanthropy.....There are instances on record of women who have been authors of Vedic teachings and held open discussions with learned men in the courts of enlightened kings. They joined in debates and held their own against eminent scholars. Women who remained unmarried for their life took their place side by side with men and enjoyed equal respect." But where is to-day the grace and respect that formerly attached to the name of Indian womanhood and where is that sober moral

urge for promoting the interests and position of women in India in the light of the lofty idealism of the past ? We must remember that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, and that it is the mothers who, after all, hold the power in their hands to build a healthy and prosperous nation. But the nation that forgets the worship of the Mother can hardly be expected to entertain its pristinest respect for womanhood. Our battle-field is now not the open arena where the warriors meet to pour down the 'sweet wine' of life for prestige and honour, for the safeguard of national interests,—but is the cozy corner of a downy bed where the clink of bangles lulls the puissant hero to rosy dreams and visionary ideals ! We have ourselves forged fetters for us as much as for our women. The whole community of men in India stands self-condemned for the shabby treatment meted out to the woman-folk as well as for the indifference with which they have brushed aside their legitimate claims for self-expression in the social environments. There has consequently been an insistent cry for 'the vindication of the economic and social position of women,' and it has been urged that such 'vindication is dependent 'on the eschewing of obsolete ideas of outworn superstitions and upon the realisation of the value and beauty of each individual life and the complete elimination firstly of the theory of the inferiority of the women on the part of the men and even more perhaps the elimination of the inferiority complex on the part of the women themselves.'

It is admitted on all hands that the curse of exclusiveness that hangs as swords of Damocles over their devoted heads should be removed for a spontaneous growth of the 'better halves' of mankind. But in 'the vindication of their economic and social rights' they must not overstep the legitimate bounds of freedom conceded to their position in society by the ancient seers. We still fail to understand what principle of Hindu social polity has prompted a certain section of our 'reformed' brethren to drag down our mothers and sisters to public halls and theatres for a practical demonstration of their unique skill in dancing, acting and the like, unless it be an inordinate and criminal charm for Western social ideal. Is this the nature of freedom these advocates of woman's rights so loudly speak of from the platform and the press ? The 'tableaux vivants' presented of late by 'the

advanced women ' of our society on public stages in imitation of ' the most respectable members of English society ' are unfailing indications of a peculiar mentality begotten of a blind fascination for Occidental social outlook ; and this, in the opinion of some advanced thinkers, ' shall raise the character of our public stage in morals and respectability ' ! But these overzealous reformers of the country must bear in mind that this is not only *toto caelo* opposed to the ancient ideals of Hindu social life but is calculated to open the gate for further demoralisation in society and to destroy the very foundation of domestic sanctity. Every right-thinking man should raise an indignant protest against^t such a rank prostitution of the sterling parts of our womanhood in professional theatrical stages. Indeed, the barge of Indian life has drifted a good deal from its ancient moorings, and we have all along impressed upon our countrymen the necessity of adjusting our modern life to the advancing ideas of the ' progressive ' world in so far as it does not transcend the sacred bound of our ancient idealism.

To-day the destiny of our social life is really in the melting pot. The age-long political subjection has devitalised the once heroic race of the country ; and the annals of modern India present but a tragic record of the rank persecution of our helpless womanfolk. It is time to consider what practical step has up till now been taken for the stimulation^l of the noble instincts in our mothers and sisters and for the safeguard of their moral and spiritual interests against unbridled hooliganism except the empty cry for ' rights and privileges ' and blind imitation of outlandish manners and customs in the name of the well-being of our society. Nobody can deny that we have gone^l down a great deal in the estimation of the world for our effeminacy and want of self-reliance. The spirit of purity and sacrifice that form the groundwork of our ideal must be brought to bear on all our activities, social or political, and the ancient ideal of Shakti-worship—the worship of the Mother Divine—must be revived and re-lived if we are again to stand as a full-fledged race before the bar of humanity. The spirit of heroic self-sacrifice is the indispensable condition of growth and salvation in human society, and when that spirit is gone, the whole structure of life topples down to the dust. Not many years back, Sri Ramakrishna,

the Saint of Dakshineswar, worshipped the Goddess of Power, and his illustrious life must be an eye-opener to the people in this age of Mammon-worship. The country needed again, as it had done before, the consecration of such a life at the altar of the Mother for the unfoldment of the spiritual vision of mankind. It was only when the spiritual agony of his heart was the most intense and he was prepared to put an end to his mortal frame for a vision of the Mother that She revealed Herself in all Her resplendence. In his own synthetic personality he has again vivified the ancient ideal of womanhood. "He realised God as a woman, and it was the flowering point of a certain tender chivalry that always marked him and makes his life the true emancipation of Indian women." Every one knows what his respect and veneration was for women who were to him so many manifestations of the Divine Mother. No less significant is the life of his illustrious consort Sarada Mani Devi at this psychological hour when the country has, through the glamour of Western culture, forgotten the ancient ideal of Indian woman. Her life was Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. No other finer instance of a harmonious blending of the nobler qualities of head and heart—of purity and devotion, modesty and heroism, renunciation and service—can ever be witnessed in the recent life-history of any nation of the world. Her whole life was a continuous prayer, and it serves as a mighty brake against the advancing tide of modern materialism beating upon the shore of our experience. Such a life of renunciation and spiritual wisdom is the priceless treasure to humanity in every age and clime; and the ideals that inspired this woman to a life of exalted sacrifice should be placed before every woman of our household to purify the atmosphere of Indian life.

The Mother revealed Herself to the seers not merely as the embodiment of tender affection but also as the symbol of the Terrible. But to our eternal disgrace our country has long ago given the go-by to the worship of the terrible aspect of the Mother and has slipped down to degeneracy and moral turpitude. The age-long subjection coupled with a woeful lack of proper cultivation of the heroic instincts of human nature has created a unique mentality that has not in it the promise of a heroic expansion and robust optimism. The country needs the worship of the "Terrible."

The voice of the Mother cries out over the teeming earth for lives, for the lives and blood of the crowned kings of men. "Remember," she calls out, "that I who cry have shown also the way to answer. For every kind, mother has been the first, for protection of her flock, to leap to death.....Religion has been ever the love of death. But to-day the flame of renunciation shall be lighted in my lands and consume men with a passion beyond control of thought. Then shall my people thirst for self-sacrifice as others for enjoyment. Then shall labour and suffering and service be counted sweet instead of bitter. For this age is great in time, and I, even I, Kali, am the Mother of the nations." Indeed nothing is impossible of accomplishment with sacrifice. It should therefore be our motto, as Sister Nivedita puts it, "not to shrink from defeat but to embrace despair. Pain is not different from pleasure; rejoice, therefore, when thou comest to the place of tears." False philosophies and religions have impeded India in the path of self-realisation. There is now a lack of dynamism in Indian life. In fact there is no other way out than the worship of Shakti—the worship of the Terrible.

To carry a whole race to a new rallying-place round a standard planted on the old frontier has been the peculiar mission of our great religious genius. With the advent of Renaissance in India the great souls of the land have pointed with unerring precision to the one universal need,—the need of worship of the Shakti and the respect for womanhood. In spite of the multiplicity of religious faiths, Bharat-Shakti is far above the petty denominations of religions and stands as the leveller of all artificial distinctions between humanity. Every true son of India, whether a Hindu or a Mussulman, Christian or Buddhist, Jaina or a Parsee, can, if he loves his country, rally round the Mother to safeguard her honour without any prejudice to his religious conviction. Swami Vivekananda—an intrepid worshipper of the Mother—boldly points out what is indispensably necessary to be blessed with the vision of the Mother:—

"Who can misery love,
Dance in destruction's dance,
And hug the form of Death,—
To him the Mother comes."

The vision of the Mother executing a wild dance of carnage, and breathing death and terror in every breath, says the Swami, is the only image that, of all others, should be implanted in the heart to sacrifice all our weakness and fear at her bloody altar. For without it the sleeping Leviathan shall not be roused from its deep slumber and the country saved from the cataclysm of outlandish ideas creeping into our sacred social idealism. "Forget not that the ideal of thy motherland is Sita, Sayitri, and Damayanti—that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure—are not for thy individual happiness; forget not—that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother-altar and that thy social order is but the reflex of the infinite universal motherhood." Remember also that when we shall learn to honour our womanhood, we shall then alone be worthy votaries in the temple of the Mother Divine, and then alone our sacrifices at the altar of Mother-India—the Bharat-Shakti—shall be accepted for the good of ourselves as well as for humanity at large.

RECONCILIATION OF THE RACES AND RELIGIONS IN INDIA*

By Swami Ghanananda

Barriers to Reconciliation : It is a fact of unique importance in the history of the world to-day, that all the races and peoples have come together as they have never done before. Science has annihilated distance and removed our physical barriers. The mental barriers, too, are being removed by education and culture. And the world is waiting for the breaking of the spiritual barriers for its complete unification.

What is true of the world is true also of India. Her unification requires her mental and spiritual barriers to be demolished. The India of to-day is nearly all Aryan and Dravidian, "with a relatively small Mongolian or partly Mongolian element.....in the north and north-east, a slight Persian and Afghan element in the north-west, and a certain miscellaneous elements in the hills and remoter regions here and there, which are remnants of a primitive people or peoples". The Aryan and the Dravidian races have been amalgamated and belong to

* Read at the Sixth All-India and Burma Bahai Convention held at Calcutta on the 26th December, 1928.

the Hindu religion. The Moslems, most of whom were originally Hindus, the Jews and the Christians belong to the Semitic group of religions. The Zoroastrians, the Buddhists, the Jains and the Sikhs belong to the Aryan group. We have to bring about a reconciliation of these different racial elements and religions.

Eclecticism and Synthesis of Religions.—We shall first consider the reconciliation of the various religions in India, as it will furnish a basis for the reconciliation of the different communities. Religious conflicts always arise from narrow individualism which makes one believe that one's own religion is right and the religions of others are wrong. The blind bigot of every religion is very sincere but lacks in width. His conviction is intense but lacks in charity. To root out these evils, the method of Eclecticism has been suggested by many and adopted by few. Eclecticism undoubtedly presents a wide outlook, but it creates a new difficulty. The eclectic takes different elements from different religions, puts them together and forms a new religion of his own, adding perhaps to the already existing faiths of the world. Eclecticism cannot convince the critical. It has no divine sanction behind it, whereas all religions have been founded by Teachers and Prophets on the impregnable rock of their divine realisations.

As Eclecticism is unsatisfying, it has been supplanted by Synthesis or Harmony. This combines the depth and ardour of individualism with the width and catholicity of Eclecticism. It does not disturb any single faith but recognises the greatness and integrity of all faiths. It affirms that all religions are true—that they are all different paths to the same goal. It recognises that diversity is the law of nature and cannot be destroyed. Our aim should be to see unity through this diversity, not to effect uniformity through standardisation. Pound the crystals of different sweet substances and boil them down to form a single syrup : you effect uniformity. But set the syrup to cool : you will see different crystals of the original substances thrown out. The different religions are like these crystals—all having the sweetness of Divine Bliss, but having different forms.

Revelations of Comparative Religions.—Marvellous indeed are the revelations of comparative religion which is coming more and more into vogue at the present day. All religions contain such universal moral sentiments and precepts as truthfulness, temperance, justice, kindness to men and animals, patience, love, etc. They all teach men to strive after moral and spiritual perfection. They all inculcate the Golden Rule to do unto others what we would wish others to do unto us. They all deal with such fundamental issues as God, soul, duty, salvation, and so on. Wherein then lie the differences between one

religion and another ? They are in the conception of God and in the means and methods of realising Him. Such differences are inevitable in the nature of things, because the One Truth can be realized in different aspects and viewed from different standpoints.

The Four Parts of a Religion.—Religion generally contains four parts—mythology, rituals, philosophy, and higher spiritual disciplines. Of these, mythology and rituals form the kindergarten of religion and are necessary for those who cannot understand the higher philosophy of their own religion, or practise the higher spiritual disciplines. We find concrete symbols are used to a greater or less extent, in some form or other, in all the religions of the world. Idolatry has been condemned by many iconoclasts, because they could not see the psychology behind it, viz., that the devotee worships the Ideal through the idol. Idols, images, pictures, symbols—all these remind the worshipper of his Ideal, and lead him to the higher path. They are like the husk of the paddy—not so valuable as the grain within, yet withal essential for the germination of the seed. The stone-emblem in the Hindu-temple, the Crescent in the Moslem-mosque, and the Cross and the Bible in the Christian church are all considered holy. If the Moslem does not use images, he turns towards Mecca during prayer, and looks upon the graves of his saints and martyrs with reverence. If Buddha did not permit the use of rituals and ceremonials, the Buddhists set up statues of the Enlightened One in their Viharas. In every religion, the psychology behind the use of some concrete symbol or other is the same, namely, to remind the devotee of God and evoke associations of holiness and purity. There is a difference, only in degree and not in kind, between the language of mythology and the language of philosophy and between abstract meditation and worship through rituals and ceremonials. Man progresses not from error to truth, but from lower truth to higher truth. This is a great lesson which we have to remember when we attempt at a reconciliation of religions.

The man with an evolved mind is not satisfied with rituals and mythology. He wants to question, analyse, dissect. This need of the evolved man is fulfilled by all the religions of the world. Often a religion has many systems of philosophy propounded from different standpoints. It is well known that India has produced six systems, and the Vedanta, one of these systems, has three aspects. Thus there are Dwaitic or Dualistic, or Visishta-Adwaitic, or Qualified-Monistic, and Adwaitic or Monistic systems of philosophy, all belonging to Hinduism. The different systems explaining the religious truths of various religions are not speculative like modern Western philosophy but intuitive. They are based on the spiritual experiences recorded in the respectiv

scriptures to which they belong and point to them as the goal to be attained.

A question may be raised : what is the soundness of the philosophy of a religion when it differs from that of other religions ? Could Dwaita, Visishta-Adwaita and Adwaita in Hinduism be all true ? Could the systems of philosophy as propounded by Islam, Christianity and Buddhism be all true ? The answer is simple. Practise the spiritual disciplines as enjoined in the different scriptures and see if you do not arrive at the experiences which their systems of philosophy respectively uphold. This, then, is the greatest challenge which every religion throws out to the world in general and to its adverse critics in particular. Religion is realisation. The realisations of the ancient Vedic Seers and the later Incarnations, Teachers and Saints of Hinduism, of Buddha, of Mahavira, of Moses, of Christ, of Mohammed and others, form the eternal and adamant bedrock on which the different religions of the world have been built. Spiritual experience is the criterion of every religion, and every religion has stood this test according to the testimony of its founder and saints.

Catholicity of Every Religion :—It is a matter for agreeable surprise that comparative religion proves beyond doubt that every religion possesses an unmistakable sentiment of catholicity or broad-mindedness,—a generous hospitable attitude towards other religions. All the different scriptures of the world bear testimony to this.

Beginning with the Hindu scriptures we read, “Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti”—“Truth is one; sages call it variously”. “Who-soever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him. Oh, Partha ! All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.” Says the Prophet of Islam, “There is no compulsion in religion ; the right way is in itself distinguished from the wrong.” “Say thou, oh ye who disbelieve, I do not worship what ye worship, nor do ye worship what I worship, neither will I worship what ye worship, neither will ye worship what I worship—ye have your religion and I have my religion.” A passage from the Buddhist scriptures reads : “The root of religion is to reverence one’s own faith and never to revile the faith of others. My doctrine makes no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. It is like the sky ; it has room for all, and like water it washes all alike.” Judaism also teaches the same religious broad-mindedness. It says : “Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us ?” “Thou shalt not vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” The Zoroastrian religion has the self-same sentiment : “Have the religions of mankind no common ground ? Is there not everywhere the same

enrapturing beauty? Broad indeed is the carpet which God has spread, and many are the colours which he has given it. Whatever road I take joins the highway that leads to the Divine." In the Christian scriptures it is written: "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that revereth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." "He hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth." Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, says: "He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just, and he only is a good Mohammedan whose life is pure. Be true and thou shalt be free.....God will not ask man of what race he is. He will ask what he has done." "Love the saints of every faith. Put away your pride. Remember, the essence of religion is meakness and sympathy." "To him the delusion of whose heart is gone, Hindus and Mussulmans are the same." In fact there are so many points of similarity between the teachings of the world's different Prophets and Teachers that one is inclined to think that, if they were to meet to-day, they would embrace one another in mutual love and respect, and pass into a state of God-consciousness at their ecstatic joy. They would certainly be shocked at the religious feuds and dissensions between their various followers.

The Harmony of Religions :—It was given to India to produce an Akbar who dreamt a beautiful dream—the harmony of all religions—which he wanted to realize by convening a Parliament of Religions at Agra 352 years ago. It was given again to India to evolve a seer in Sri Ramakrishna in the nineteenth century, who was a veritable embodiment of the harmony of religions. Whereas Akbar attempted his glorious task by studying the great religions of India with the help of their accredited delegates, Sri Ramakrishna solved the problem by *living* the different religions like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Protap Chandra Mozumdar in an article entitled "Paramahansa Ramakrishna," which he contributed to the Theistic Quarterly Review says: "And what is his religion? It is orthodox Hinduism, but Hinduism of a strange type. Ramakrishna Paramahansa (for that is the name of this saint) is the worshipper of no particular Hindu God. He is not a Saiva, he is not a Sakta, he is not a Vaisnava, he is not a Vedantist; yet he is *all these*. He worships Shiva, he worships Kali, he worships Rama, he worships Krishna, and is a confirmed advocate of Vedanta doctrines. He accepts all the doctrines, all the embodiments, usages and devotional practices of every religious cult. Each in turn is infallible to him. He is an idolator, yet is a faithful and most devoted meditator of the perfections of the One Formless, Infinite Deity—whom he calls *Akhandā Sachshidananda* (Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss). Continuing the same writer says: "For

long days he subjected himself to various disciplines to realise the Mohammedan idea of an all-powerful Allah...His reverence for Christ is deep and genuine. He bows his head at the name of Jesus, honours the doctrine of his Son-ship, and we believe he once or twice attended Christian places of worship."

Such was Sri Ramakrishna. His Hindu-Sadhanas (spiritual disciplines) and realisations of God with form and God without form—of the Impersonal Absolute as well as the Personal God in the forms of Shakti, Shiva, Rama, Krishna and so on ; his Islamic Sadhana (spiritual disciplines) and realisation of Allah as Saguna-Nirakara (God without form but with attributes) ; his reverence for Christ and his vision of Him and realisation ; and many such spiritual experiences relating to Buddha, Mahavira, the Sikh Gurus and the like, led him to the following results on which he based the grand harmony of religions, systems of philosophy, and means and methods of spiritual disciplines :—

1. All religions are true, they being different paths to the same goal of Super-consciousness.

2. The positive part of every religion in which are found the way and the method of procedure through that way, as well as the goal which a sincere follower of that way would reach in the end, is true. But the negative part which speaks of punishment and domination, eternal or otherwise, for the straggler, is not true, being added to the former, for keeping the members of the community from deserting and straying into other folds.

3. Man begins his spiritual life with Dualism (Dwaita)—the idea that there is a qualitative as well as a quantitative difference between his own self and God. When he progresses in his path, he experiences the truth of Qualified-Monism (Vishista-Adwaita)—that God is the whole and he is a part of Him. And in the end, he realises the truth of Monism (Adwaita)—that the part is the same as the whole, for Infinity cannot be divided. In the first two positions of Dualism and Qualified-Monism, he realises the Personal God, with or without form, and in the last position of Monism, he realises the Impersonal Absolute.

4. There are many ways to lead men to Super-consciousness and all these ways will always fall under the general category of Jnana Yoga or the path of discrimination, Karma Yoga or the path of selfless work, Bhakti Yoga or the path of devotion, and Raja Yoga or the path of mental concentration. These paths provide scope for and methods of spiritual discipline for men in whom the intellectual, volitional, devotional and psychic tendencies preponderate.

5. Each man must have his own chosen path and must worship his own Ishta (chosen Ideal), be it Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, Allah, Christ, or any other, as the case may be. Stick to your own religion, and think that the followers of other religions are coming to the same goal through different paths.

What will be the outcome of the grand harmony of religions as proclaimed by Sri Ramakrishna ? All dissensions and conflicts between the different religions in India and the world will end once for all. All humanity will be drawn together in bonds of mutual love and sympathy. We often speak of tolerance, as if it is "the loveliest flower on the rose-bush of liberalism" but we do not see that tolerance has an air of patronising condescension about it. When we all recognise the truth and greatness of all religions, shall we be content merely with tolerating them ? Shall we not take a reverential attitude towards them ? Nay, we shall then be able even to actively help a man in his own religion. When a person appreciates any culture, philosophy and religion, other than his own, he may readily avail himself of the ennobling truths they contain ; this may perhaps help him to understand his own religion and philosophy better ; but he should never dream of giving up his own religion. Our duty then must consist not in converting a Hindu into a Christian or a Moslem, or a Christian or a Moslem into a Hindu, but help the Hindu to become a better Hindu, the Moslem a better Moslem, and the Christian a better Christian by placing more emphasis on the need for practising ethical virtues and spiritual discipline for God-realisation, and less emphasis on the differences in forms and philosophies.

Why is our vision of the harmony of religions dimmed ? Once when a forester and a lion were walking together, they fell to discussing the inevitable question, " who is the stronger, a lion or a man ? " Finding it utterly impossible to solve the problem to their mutual satisfaction, they came suddenly upon a piece of statuary representing a man in the act of throwing a lion. " There," exclaimed the forester, " you see the man is the stronger." " Ah ! yes," said the lion, " but their positions would have been reverse if a lion had been the sculptor." Men usually portray the religions other than their own in ugly colours. Every mother thinks her own child is the most beautiful in the world.

To be concluded.

BASIS OF INDIAN NATIONAL AWAKENING

By Swami Devatmananda

A cursory glance at the history of Europe and America shows how the people have been marching forward with steady footsteps in the path of national prosperity and material well-being. In spite of occasional slips and hard knocks from inside and outside, they are progressing onward with indomitable energy and perseverance. Some idealistic philosopher may look askance at them and say that their so-called civilisation is not at all perfect, it has its foundation in a bed of sands and it is liable to be shattered to pieces at any moment. Hence it is not worth having. But whatever that be there is no denying the fact that those are certainly living peoples in the world. Like a living organism theirs is a dynamic society; hence there is struggle and growth. But how different is the picture our own country presents at the present day in spite of our glorious civilisation !

It is said that great and towering personalities are the makers of their own time and environment ; but it must be admitted that they are the products of the peculiar time and condition of the society as well. The striking personality of Lord Buddha carried the society along with him. But the inevitable ebb set in and the whole land again became steeped in gloom and darkness. It was a period of inactivity and stagnation which necessitated the advent of another personality in the person of Lord Sankara who gave a tremendous impetus to the moribund state of society, thus facilitating the reign of happiness and peace, for another couple of centuries. But the inexorable law of nature is ever active : degeneration set in once more and the country glided into another period of lethargy and morbidity. Notwithstanding the fact that magnetic personalities like Lord Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramananda and a host of others,—a galaxy of pure souls—appeared on the horizon to clarify the atmosphere and instil new life and vigour into the spiritual ideas of the land, the political life grew darker, and the ordinary and simple life of the people grew more complex. They had to face and struggle with lots of difficulties that presented themselves with the change of political conditions coming in the train of foreign invasions, until the present day when the actions and reactions of diverse forces, the slavery of centuries and contact with various nationalities of diverse temperaments and ideals have contributed to the present degenerate and wretched state of the country—a state of poverty, illiteracy, disease, stagnation and slavish mentality.

The condition of society with its complexity of life is anything but satisfactory. The high and lofty ideals of the land have been banished. The worship of the all-sacrificing God-head has given place to the worship of Mammon ; and envy and jealousy have become the household deities instead. The so-called ethics of other peoples are being imitated and followed. The children—ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-educated,—instead of becoming wholesome and useful citizens, are becoming no better than burdens of the country. In the name of education fetters are being forged in the furnace of academic halls. Abject poverty is cankering the very vitals of the people. To crown all, they have lost their courage to protect and safeguard their own hearths and homes, their ancestral religion, their own self-respect and prestige. And lastly, the problem of Hindu-Moslem unity,—the most pressing of all the present-day problems, which weigh heavily upon every soul,—stands out as the most urgent call for solution and redress. In short the country has become the homeland, as it were, of all kinds of misery and sorrow.

A comparative study of the different periods of history of the country reveals the fact that inspite of the repeated attacks of the marauding forces of foreign invaders this nation still exists, whereas some of the most magnificent empires of the past have been blotted out from the map of the world. It is therefore natural to seek for an explanation for this strange phenomenon. Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-saint of modern India, declares with a seer's voice, "Understand that India is still living because she has her own quota yet to give to the general store of the world's civilisation. For a complete civilisation the world is waiting,—waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race." People of a different angle of vision, specially those whose eyes have been dazzled by the glamour of Western civilisation and culture, may cry out saying that India has no salvation unless and until she picks up the crumbs of what the Westerners may be pleased to throw at her and assimilates it in her body-politic and that, as regards politics and political organisations at least, India must sit at the feet of the Western people to learn them ; for the Indians are still in their infancy in these respects ! But these critics must bear in mind that though in scientific matters India has many things yet to learn from the West, yet in respect of political organisations India has very little or nothing to learn from the outside world. The ancient books of the land throw a flood of light upon the Hindu Monarchies and Republics that were in existence in most developed forms since the time of the Vedas down to the 7th century A.D. Panini gives a most valuable information about Hindu Republics of his time.

Says Mr. K. P. Jayswal in his admirable researches recorded in *Hindu Polity*, "Hindu Republics existed and flourished as early as the age of the Aitareya Brahmana. Ancient Hindus had already developed technical constitutions of various classes with special procedures of *Abhisheka* for each class." "Thus," continues Mr. Jayswal, "they must have experimented in those systems for some centuries before the composition of the Aitareya Brahmana. Now, the date of this Vedic work is to be regarded as Cir. 1000 B.C.....According to the Aitareya, the greater portion of Aryan India—North, West and South—was covered with Republican constitution." (*Hindu Polity*: II, pp. 137). "And it is a fact of history that some Republican Governments lasted in unbroken continuity for 500 to 800 years. Again, socialism even, an extreme form of democracy, almost Tolstoian in ideal, called *Arajaka* or non-ruler-State was experimented upon and had its existence in some States, though they were very small in extent; and it was a 'living institution,' too." (Vide: *Jaina Sutra*: Jacobi: II, 3.1.10). "Hindu Polity...had a free career of at least thirty centuries of history," thus sums up Mr. Jayswal, "a career longer than that of all the politics known to history. Babylon might have lived a few centuries longer, but unfortunately Babylon is no more. Against this we have India still existing, and in this respect China—another civil polity—is her only parallel." (II. 709.) "Thus, in olden times the Hindus had their Mazzinis, Tolstois and Lenins as well; in fact such theories are not innovations but evidently the most ancient in the world.

Hence the ill-informed critics should be totally disillusioned in their idea that the Hindu lacked in political culture and capabilities. It is not an exaggeration to say that the systems and methods of organisations were certainly nothing short of perfection; for, their outstanding merit is proved by their continuous life. Such being the case those old experimental results can, very well, be used as materials for our future guidance and procedure though evidently they are to be modified according to the changed time, condition and needs of the country. And the task of discovering and fully utilising the above rightful inheritance of the land and culture devolves upon the patriotic souls and experts upon whom depends the whole future glory and honour of the ill-fated land of ours.

Last but not the least important point to note here is that though the ancient Hindus experimented so boldly and also so successfully on the matters of politics, their whole aim of life was not centred in that alone; they early discovered that the whole process of human evolution, individual and collective, including Society and State, has

an ultimate divine purpose,—a purpose for the full manifestation of the divinity in man. At that hoary antiquity of the early Rig Veda where mythology dares not peep, the Aryans discovered that immortal goal supreme which was latterly developed into a full-fledged philosophy in the Upanishads. And since then with the rolling of time those people have formed and developed all their life's activities in consonance and harmony with that supreme end embodied in them. Hence, not by an accretion of external parts, but by way of natural growth this huge machinery of Aryan life has come down through many a vicissitude until the present state of temporary morbidity and degeneration. Religious life has formed the very backbone of the same organic Aryan race, for this race cannot move, nay, cannot live even, without the help of religion and spirituality. But her future growth and progress must be a readjustment of her national life with the changing and advancing spirit of the time without engrafting any uncongenial element in her national body. Thus declares Swami Vivekananda with a clarion voice, "Religion and religion alone is the life of India and when that goes, India will die, inspite of politics, inspite of social reforms, inspite of Kuvera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children." Consequently, it is clear once for all, that political regeneration, if it comes,—and come it must,—will come in and through the upheaval of religious ideas and ideals alone; and the fabric of political life built anew without religion as its basis, will prove as unstable as a house made of cards.

It is stated that she lives, because she has a part to play in the world-drama: she has a spiritual mission, yet to fulfil. But is it not madness, pure and simple, on the part of a slavish degenerate nation to assert that it has a mission to the world and that mission is nothing but light spiritual? The only answer lies with her history. Whenever the country, as also the world, required spiritual food it was supplied out of this very soil and it gave peace and spiritual comfort to thirsty millions. Those spiritual upheavals carrying with them material prosperity and happiness of the masses in general, are the main and important chapters of her history. And the historic success of the Hindu monk of India, at the Parliament of Religions in the World Fair held at Chicago marked the beginning of another such epoch-making revival which is gathering its indomitable force with the passing of days only to flood the surface of the globe once more with the ideas of brotherhood and fraternity, of peace and happiness, and of spirituality and salvation.

But the economic and, following close to the heels, the social problems also press hard upon us for redress. They are so much

inter-related that one cannot safely isolate one from the other. To crown all, there is the political problem which stands in the way of a dynamic progress in any sphere whatsoever. What is the way out from this medley of complicated conditions of our present life? What will become of "half the agricultural population who do not know from half year's end to another what it is to have a full meal"?—(Sir Charles Elliot). And according to Mr. Gokhale "60 to 70 millions of the people of India do not know what it is to have their hunger satisfied even once in the year." What will become of the seething mass of 95 per cent. of the illiterates of the land, and of the socially suppressed womankind thereof? What will become of the famines, epidemics, etc., which have become regular visitors to our land?

Hence our paramount duty is to 'feed India' first. But as has been said already the economic and social problems including sanitary, educational and the like are so very interrelated and interdependent that to handle a particular one isolatedly is not so very safe and easy. Hence is the necessity of attacking the problems from all sides and simultaneously, so that there will be a harmonious and all-round progress. Renaissance followed by reformation has been afoot in our country for about a century; but very little genuine progress has been made in respect of social and economic amelioration of the people at large. For, if we strike a balance of the account of the progress and regress of the country during the century in question, perhaps, the negative side will appear heavier. Undoubtedly, there has been some progress and gain also in different respects in the country through its contact with the Western civilisation and culture; but side by side it has lost much of its native worth at the same time as well.

There are some who in their enthusiasm for foreign culture forget the goal they strive for. The so-called reformers fail to realise that a nation like a living being is an organic whole with a number of limbs subservient to and acting harmoniously with the vital part of the live body, and that to bring about an all-round development of that body the vitality alone has to be purified and strengthened so that, the other parts may automatically be supplied with fresh vigour. The credit of the discovery of the above great truth lies with the Swami Vivekananda, who some 30 years back saw with the keen and penetrating eyes of a seer that "in each nation, as in music, there is a main note, a central theme, upon which all others turn. Each nation has a theme; everything else is secondary. India's theme is religion: social reform and everything else is secondary." He exhorted the people to revitalise the main theme of the national

life, so that all other parts might be purged of all poisonous germs. In short keeping the central point firm and steady, the circle can be extended to any degree and the remedies of the social and economic life must be prescribed not according to individual whims and caprices but in the light of the eternal national principle, conducive to the commonweal—temporal and spiritual—of the people.

But who is to take up the task of reforming a country so vast and with problems so varied and complicated? Where is the true reformer and leader? There are plenty of reformers but where are those to be reformed? Where are those patriots whose heart bleeds for the down-trodden millions and whose very being has become saturated with the idea of service to humanity? Where are those fresh and untainted youths with 'muscles of iron and nerves of steel, and a heart adamant', who are ready to make a bridge of their bodies, in the service of their brethren, upon which the nation shall pass? The country has had enough of so-called self-constituted leaders and reformers. It is now in need of a handful of genuine, pure-hearted, self-sacrificing men and women imbued with a burning patriotic spirit, and consecrated to serve humbly the innumerable images of the Lord—the dumb millions of the land.

This country stands as an eternal illustration of purity and self-sacrifice. And it has never been in dearth of such brave and stout hearts who can sacrifice their all for the starving Narayanas. There are some sincere few who in their humble way are doing their best. Mahatmaji is one of such luminous stars in the Indian firmament. He is a living example of purity, patriotism and self-sacrifice. But he is only a drop in the ocean and many more are still required to carry the banner on.

Denunciation never helped any progress. Help, if you can; if not, for Heaven's sake do not stand in the way. Sink all differences fancied or real for the cause; for, the time wants it, the country is in need of it and the people are waiting for it. Let us be sincere to the backbone, in thought, deed and word. It is thousand times better to die struggling for a high and noble cause than to wear the life out like cats and dogs. Hence let such patriots, and sincere souls of the country come out of their narrow nooks and corners and keeping the ideal of renunciation and service constantly before their eyes let them advance forward with a bold heart and stout steps for the rejuvenation of Mother India.

KABIR DAS

By. T. S. Avinashilingam, B.A., B.L.

Kabir is the tallest tree in the luxuriant forest of mediæval poesy. He is the most predominant figure in the poetry and religious history of mediæval India. His influence has been vast and has lasted for well-nigh five centuries and will last for many centuries more. We know very little of his life. Except what we come to know from his own songs there is little else we learn from any other sources. Around his life a vast mass of popular legends has grown, and it is immensely difficult to decipher among that huge mass the truth from the untruth, the probable from the improbable. Of two facts we are certain ; and those are that he was born at Benares and died at Maghar. All the other details of his life that we know of, we get either from his own lyrics or from popular legends.

Nevertheless his influence was great. That was the time when Northern India was responding to the trumpet-call of reviving Hinduism. Sri Ramanuja had brought the living spirit of religion to the form-ridden Hinduism of the South and that was taken to Northern India through the great sage Ramananda. Thus the forms of religion were giving way to the spirit of religion. The Orthodox form-ridden Brahmins were asked to look behind the rights and ceremonials and learn their real significance. That was again the time when the great Sufis of Persia were flourishing and the influence of Jallaludin Rumi, Alauddin Attar and others was strong on India and the result was the rise of a poet-saint, who embodied within himself the sublime spirit of the Sufi mystics and Hinduism, who set at nought the superstitions of the age and personified within himself the real spirit of the times. That saint was Kabir.

He was born at Benares of poor Hindu parents, but bred up in a Mohammedan family. He was quite unlettered. The religious influence of the place must have begun to tell upon his boyish mind, which was by nature pure and devoted towards God. He had early contracted a wish to lead a spiritual life. For that he wanted a Guru and a Guide who would lead him through the mystic paths of religion. He had chosen a master under whose feet it was his ardent desire to sit and learn. The master that he had chosen in his heart was the great sage Ramananda, a learned Hindu and he himself was a Mohammedan by adoption. On many an occasion he tried to approach the master, but the disciples of the sage would not allow him access, as being of the forbidden caste. He pleaded much with them, but to no

purpose. His obvious sincerity of heart and yearning had no influence over them. At last Kabir hit upon an original and ingenious plan to get the blessings of the revered master.

He knew that the master was going to the Ganges to take his bath early every morning. He also knew that it would then be so dark as not to make visible clearly anything that would be on the steps of the banks of the river. He determined to lie on the banks of the river just at the place where Ramananda used to pass every morning on his way to the sacred river. While he was so lying Ramananda unconsciously stepping upon him, found to his great surprise that he had trampled over a man, and cried aloud "Rama, Rama" his favourite Manthram. Kabir took that as his initiation. Ramananda enquired after the man who had laid himself in his path. Kabir told him of his yearning to lead a spiritual life, and how the disciples had refused him access to the master. Ramananda found the spiritual genius of Kabir and embraced him as his disciple.

We know very little about the later life of Kabir. That he must have attended many discussions, philosophical and religious, along with his master is fairly certain as he shows an intimate knowledge of the Hindu Philosophy. He was a weaver by caste and by weaving he made his livelihood. He was one of those rare individuals who made their professions their Sadhana. He had to work and weave every day in order to procure the livelihood for himself and his family, and while doing his work, he meditated upon the Lord. Work was not a hindrance to him. As he worked he prayed, and as he prayed he worked. Just as when the fingers count the beads the devotee tries to concentrate his mind on his Ishtam, Kabir meditated as his hands and feet were working at his loom. With Paul the tent-maker, Boehme the cobbler, and Bunyan the tinker, Kabir proved how a highly spiritual life might be led along with the daily duties of a family man.

A Hindu by birth and a Mohammedan by adoption, he combined within himself the best traditions of both the communities. He saw with his great spiritual eye the absurd notions of the followers of both the faiths, their great superstitions, and the weight that they attached to lifeless ceremonials. He called himself "The Child of both Alla and Rama" and proclaimed that God is "neither in the temple nor in the mosque, neither in the Kaaba nor in Kailas". All the ceremonials, he declared, were useless without devotion, love, and renunciation. He says again and again that God is nearer than the nearest, to us and that we can feel Him if we had the requisite love for Him.

One who was giving free vent to such opinions could not have been popular among the orthodox sections of both the communities.

Once he was even hauled up before Sikander Lodi on an accusation of heresy. But that great Prince perceiving the real spiritual genius of Kabir left him unhampered and untouched. As time passed Kabir's spirituality asserted itself and slowly a large band of devotees and disciples gathered around him. At last at the ripe old age of about 78 he passed away at Maghar amidst the singing of Bhajan, mourned by both Mohammedans and Hindus.

"A beautiful legend tells us that after his death his Mohammedan and Hindu disciples disputed the possession of his body, which the Mohammedans wished to bury, the Hindus to burn. As they argued together Kabir appeared before them and told them to lift the shroud and look at that which lay beneath. They did so, and found in the place of the corpse a heap of flowers; half of which were buried by the Mohammedans at Maghar, and half carried by the Hindus to the holy city of Benares to be burned—a fitting conclusion to a life which had made fragrant the most beautiful doctrines of the two great creeds."

The sublimity and grandeur of his thoughts, his passionate appeals for the realisation of God, and his absolute freedom from any sort of prejudice or superstition can be appreciated and enjoyed only by going through his wonderful lyrics. And a few of them are produced herewith:

I.

O Servant, where dost thou seek Me?

Lo! I am beside thee.

I am neither in temple nor in mosque: I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in Yoga and renunciation. If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me: thou shalt meet Me In a moment of time.

Kabir says, "O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath."

II.

It is the mercy of my true Guru that has made me know the unknown;

I have learned from Him how to walk without feet, to see without eyes, to hear without ears, to drink without mouth, to fly without wings;

I have brought my love and my meditation into the land where there is no sun and moon, nor day and night.

Without eating, I have tasted of the sweetness of nectar; and without water, I have quenched my thirst.

Where there is the response of delight, there is the fullness of joy.
Before whom can that joy be uttered ?

Kabir says : " The Guru is great beyond words, and great is the good fortune of the disciple."

III.

My body and my mind are grieved for the want of Thee ;

O my Beloved ! come to my house.

When people say I am Thy bride, I am ashamed ; for I have not touched Thy heart with my heart.

Then what is this love of mine ? I have no taste for food, I have no sleep ; my heart is ever restless within doors and without.

As water is to the thirsty, so is the lover to the bride. Who is there that will carry my news to my Beloved ?

Kabir is restless : he is dying for sight of Him.

IV.

Where is the night, when the sun is shining ? If it is night then the sun withdraws its light.

Where knowledge is, can ignorance endure ? If there be ignorance, then knowledge must die.

If there be lust, how can love be there ? Where there is love, there is no lust.

Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight. Fight, O my brother, as long as life lasts.

Strike off your enemy's head, and there make an end of him quickly : then come, and bow your head at your King's Durbar.

He who is brave, never forsakes the battle : he who flies from it is no true fighter.

In the field of this body a great war goes forward against passion, anger, pride, and greed :

It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment and purity, that this battle is raging ; and the sword that rings forth most loudly is the sword of His Name.

Kabir says : " When a brave knight takes the field, a host of cowards is put to flight.

It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker : for the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her husband. For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle with death is soon ended :

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as life lasts it never ceases."

V.

O Sadhu ! the simple union is the best.

Since the day when I met with my Lord, there has been no end to the sport of our love.

I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my body ;

I see with eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty everywhere :

I utter His name, and whatever I see, it reminds me of Him ; whatever I do, it becomes His worship.

The rising and the setting are one to me ; all contradictions are solved.

Wherever I go, I move round Him,

All I achieve is His service :

When I lie down, I lie prostrate at His feet.

VI.

Have you not heard the tune which the unstruck Music is playing ?

In the midst of the chamber the harp of joy is gently and sweetly played ; and where is the need of going without to hear it ?

If you have not drunk of the nectar of that One Love, what boots it though you should purge yourself of all stains ?

The Kazi is searching the words of the Koran, and instructing others : but if his heart be not steeped in that love, what does it avail, though he be a teacher of men ?

The Yogi dyes his garments with red : but if he knows nought of that colour of love, what does it avail though his garments be tinted ?

Kabir says : " Whether I be in the temple or the balcony, in the camp or in the flower garden, I tell you truly that every moment my Lord is taking His delight in me."

VII.

SUBTLE is the path of love !

Therein there is no asking and no not-asking.

There one loses one's self at His feet,

There one is immersed in the joy of the seeking : plunged in the deeps of love as the fish in the water.

The lover is never slow in offering his head for his Lord's service.

Kabir declares the secret of this love.

VIII.

O SADHU ! my land is a sorrowless land.

I cry aloud to all, to the king and the beggar, the emperor and the fakir—

Whosoever seeks for shelter in the Highest, let all come and settle in my land !

Let the weary come and lay his burdens here !

So live here, my brother, that you may cross with ease to that other shore.

It is a land without earth or sky, without moon or stars ;

For only the radiance of Truth shines in my LORD'S DURBAR.

Kabir says : " O beloved brother ! naught is essential save Truth." †

DR. RADHAKRISHNAN'S INDIAN PHILOSOPHY*

(A REVIEW)

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

Dr. Radhakrishnan is now one of the leading figures in the world of philosophy and specially in the world of Indian Philosophy. He is a keen and critical student of Western philosophy, and he is charting the ocean of Indian Philosophy as well. To master the philosophies of the world even a first-rate mind endowed with subtle and comprehensive powers of analysis and synthesis would require many decades of devoted and strenuous life. Even if depth and breadth could not be combined fully till the evening of life, the attempt to take broad surveys is itself a process of liberal education and is a creator and conveyer of the higher enlightenment.

To pass under review here all the topics dealt with in these big volumes is obviously impossible, because if the learned author found it difficult to compress many centuries of philosophic thought into two volumes each running into nearly eight hundred pages, it would be absolutely beyond the limits of possibility to compress them into the petty limits of a small review. I shall therefore assay here only the simpler and humbler of task of indicating the procession of

† Selections from Kabir's poems, translated by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore.

* Indian Philosophy. Vol. II ; by S. Radhakrishnan, King George V Professor of Philosophy, University of Calcutta. Published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd. London, Ruskin House, 40 Museum Street, W.C.1. New York : The Macmillan Company.

Indian philosophic thought as dealt with by the learned author and hinting at what are the deficiencies in his stupendous and magnificent attempt. Such deficiencies are unavoidable in a first attempt of such a colossal magnitude. In a further and later and greater synthesis to which it is a prelude, we can have an even finer and more accurate and architectonic presentation.

Dr. Radhakrishnan has done India and the world the great service of presenting the panorama of Indian philosophical evolution in a clear and fascinating style. The pageant of Indian thought glitters brightly and vividly in his pages. An adequacy of equipment for such a tremendous task is hard to secure by ordinary men. Dr. Radhakrishnan shows such inadequacy in various places. If we refer to them it is not because our equipment is more or we have a cavilling spirit. Our object in this critical review is rather a desire to get an even fine pageant of Indian thought from the author's hands.

In his earlier volume on Indian Philosophy, Dr. Radhakrishnan has discussed the Rig Veda, the Upanishads, Indian Materialism, the pluralistic realism of the Jains, the ethical idealism of early Buddhism, epic philosophy, the theism of the Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism as a religion, and the schools of Buddhism. The wide range traversed by him in the first volume is itself refreshing and exhilarating. The work deals with the fountains of Indian Philosophy and also the early portion of the great river of Indian thought. Dr. Radhakrishnan has however been in error in taking up a scoffing attitude as regards the commentators. He says: "Many Indian scholars dread opening their tomes; which more often confuse than enlighten." Whatever their demerits be, they were men of clear thought and clear expression, using a language which of all the languages of the world is the one most perfectly adapted for philosophic thought and expression. Yet Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "Obscurity of thought, subtlety of logic, and intolerance of disposition mark the worst type of commentators." Further, the learned author has accepted the view of the Western savants that the Vedas contain crude and primitive philosophic notions and merely deify the powers of nature. But the traditional Indian view is that the Vedas are eternal and are merely *revealed* by God to Man and are not the creation of man, and that they reveal to man the Supreme Godhead in itself and in its manifestations. The sounds of the Vedas are eternal and the Karma Kanda deals with the Karmas (acts) leading to the auspiciousness of the soul while the Jnana Kanda deals with the nature and the beatific realisation of the soul. Whether such a view will be accepted by Western savants or not, an Indian thinker may well

be expected to realise and express and stress the Indian attitude on this point. The learned author has further erred in his estimate of Buddhism and of the attitude of Hinduism towards Buddhism. He says that the Hindu quarrels not so much with the metaphysics of Buddha as with his programme of human conduct. The truth is rather the reverse. The Vedanta Sutras fought a terrific battle against the various subjectivistic and nihilistic ideas of the various schools of Buddhist thought and drove Buddhism from the life and mind of India for ever. Further, in trying to put the Upanishadic concepts into the pigeon-holes of Western philosophical terminology, we find the learned author involved in many puzzling situations. The philosophy of the West has been often shipwrecked on the insufficiently-realised and inadequately-expressed conception of the Absolute. The Absolute of the Western philosophy has been a source of interminable confusion, and Western philosophy never strove to relate itself to life and broke away from religion. In India the concept of the Nirguna Brahman relates to the deepest fact of human experience, and Indian philosophy walked hand in hand with religion and life.

The Brahman of the Upanishads is noumenal, infinite, eternal Being and Bliss. The learned author has stumbled over the Advaita doctrine of Maya in his earlier volume as well as in his later volume on Indian Philosophy. I shall refer to this feature later on.

The stupendous character of the reconstruction of the Vedic philosophy becomes apparent only when we evaluate the six systems of philosophy (the Darsanas) in the light of the Buddhist philosophy. But for the Darsanas it would not have been possible to achieve the overthrow of the Buddhist doctrine. By a systematic and logical and comprehensive appeal to the intellect, the sages who wrote the Darsanas achieved the overthrow of Buddhism and the reassertion and re-enthronement of the Vedic philosophy and religion. The obvious divergences of doctrine as amongst the Darsanas themselves may easily be magnified. Even those differences were only meant to magnify one or another aspect of departure from the pessimistic and nihilistic and sceptical schools of Buddhist thought. The Darsanas really show a crescendo of the genuine and ancient Hindu philosophic and religious doctrine. All the other Darsanas or systems of the re-asserted Hindu philosophic thought were summed up and included and transcended in the Uttara Mimamsa or the Vedanta Sutras which contain the highest Indian thought that lives to this day.

Dr. Radhakrishnan describes in his second volume on Indian Philosophy the Darsanas as the six Brahminical systems. Why

should the systems be called Brahminical? They are all systems of Indian thought, and have influenced the thought of all class and communities in India and might well be called by the generic name of the six systems of Indian Philosophy—which, by the way, was the appropriate designation adopted by Professor Max Muller. The author deals in this work with the Logical Realism of the Nyaya, the Atomic Pluralism of the Vaiseshika, the Sankhya system, the Yoga system of Patanjali, the Purva-Mimamsa, the Vedanta Sutra, the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara, the Theism of Ramanuja, and Saiva-Sakta and later Vaishnava Theism. It is difficult to realise why he calls the Nyaya as Logical Realism and the Vaiseshika as Atomic Pluralism. Both are realistic and pluralistic systems in one sense, though they have differences of tenets and doctrines as among themselves.

Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly points out the inter-connectedness of the six systems or *darsanas*. He says: "All logical attempts to gather the floating conceptions of the world into some great general ideas were regarded as *darsanas*. They all help us to see some aspect of the truth. This conception led to the view that the apparently isolated and independent systems were really members of a larger historical plan. Their nature would not be completely understood so long as they were viewed as self-dependent, without regard to their place in the historic inter-connection."

It is not possible to go here in detail into the learned author's brilliant and comprehensive exposition of the six systems of Indian philosophy. But I shall refer briefly to one or two points in regard to his exposition of the systems of Advaita Vedanta. Dr. Radhakrishnan has been at pains to prove that Brahman is not a metaphysical abstraction but is "a living dynamic spirit, the source and container of the infinitely varied forms of reality." He hints that Sri Sankaracharya tries to make out that Brahman is an abstraction. In short he tries to bring the Upanishadic thought into line with Bergsonianism! According to Sri Sankara's exposition of the highest Upanishadic thought, Brahman is *Anubhava* or realisation as *Sachchidananda*, i.e., the Blissful Absolute. Such a Blissful Absolute or Noumenon is not a mere metaphysical abstraction unrelated to experience. On the other hand it is the deepest and most fundamental experience. Because the West is unable to get out of its entanglements of pluralistic notions even when groping towards the Absolute, does it follow that Sri Sankara's clear and unwavering idea should be diluted or coloured in a form suitable to the West, or ridiculed or damned with faint praise? In his first volume Dr. Radhakrishnan

says: "If we insist on some explanation, the most satisfactory one is to make the absolute a unity with a difference or a concrete dynamic spirit. We then reach the self and the not-self which interact and develop the whole universe." Here we can easily detect an apparent confusion of thought. Dr. Radhakrishnan is either puzzled by the doctrine of *Maya* or *Adhyasa*, or he presents it in a ridiculous light to show that Upanishadic thought is really abreast of modern European thought. Sri Sankara says that knowledge (*Jnana*) is *Vasthutantra* (dependent on the object) and thus emphasises the objective element in knowledge, and combats the view of the idealists that there is no object apart from the sensation of the object. *Maya* is not illusion. *Maya* has been defined as *Bhava Swarupa*. *Maya* is the cause of the universe but is stultified in the case of one who attains Brahmasakshatkara but continues for all other souls. It is in this sense that the world is unreal, or rather, of phenomenal reality (जगन्मिथ्या). Dr. Radhakrishnan falls foul of "the false imitators of the Upanishad ideal, who with an extreme of arrogant audacity declare that Brahman is an absolutely homogeneous impersonal intelligence—a most dogmatic declaration akin to the true spirit of the Upanishads." This bitterness is absolutely unwarranted if he had the Adwaitins in view. He says in Volume I: "As a matter of fact such an Adwaitic philosophy seems to be only a revised version of the Madhymika metaphysics in Vedic terminology." This is an unfair characterisation of the Adwaitins who fought and overthrew the Buddhists and re-established the eternal Vedic religion. Dr. Radhakrishnan is equally in error in saying that "attempts to gain solitary salvation embodying the view that one's soul is more precious than all the world's souls put together are not the expression of any genuine modesty of spirit." He says again: "As a matter of fact the Upanishads hold that we can be free from Karma only by social service." This is a travesty of the Upanishadic doctrine. The Kathopanishad and other Upanishads declare the importance of moral purity and social love and social service. But they state also that the culmination and consummation of a life of love for men and God is that state of existence where the trammels of the flesh cease to be and the soul is self-poised in its glory of bliss (स्वे महिम्नि प्रतिष्ठितः). What social service could be done when a man is in a state of *Samadhi* here or has attained the bliss of *Jivanmukti* and is full of that joy of release? Again, Dr. Radhakrishnan says in his Volume I: "It (Moksha) is a state of activity full of freedom and perfection." "The Jivanmukta's joy of immortality realises itself in the freedom of movement." Here again is a confusion of thought due to an attempt to bring the Indian idea of the nature of the soul into line with the manifold and mutually

conflicting confusions of modern European thought on the point. What is the content of the idea of *activity* in a state of Moksha? We may as well as speak of the martial campaigns of the seven sleepers? We may as well talk of the daily activities of the polar star? To say that the bliss of the soul in the state of liberation and self-realisation is the state of quiescence of a stone or to find in it an identity with or a resemblance to the state of deep sleep (apart from using this as an analogical state to have an intellectual apprehension of the state of the bliss of self-realisation resulting in the cessation of *Samsara* or cycle of births and deaths) is surely a piece of fatuous error and self-delusion, because such bliss of self-realisation is the fruit of a life of unselfish love and service and, of moral purity and spiritual endeavour, and because a trans-*sattwic* state cannot have anything in common with a *tamasic* state.

I have only indicated above the wide range and wonderful erudition which characterise Dr. Radhakrishnan's two works on Indian Philosophy. I shall present elsewhere in my *Indian Metaphysics* my views about the procession of Indian philosophic thought. In the meanwhile we must record our deep and sincere admiration of the great work done by Dr. Radhakrishnan. He has not only presented with remarkable precision and in a remarkable and graceful literary style the wonderful panorama of Indian thought but has also helped to lift up India to an honoured seat in the Durbar of Universal thought by the lucidity and thoroughness.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Sixty-seventh Birthday of Swami Vivekananda comes off on the 1st of February, 1929. The Anniversary will be celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Brodie's Road, Mylapore, Madras, on Sunday the 3rd February.

BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The Ninety-fourth Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Wednesday, the 13th of March next. The Anniversary celebration takes place at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, on Sunday, the 17th of March, 1929. The usual feeding of poor-Narayanans will form the special feature of the functions on both the Anniversary days.

The Annual Report on the works of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapeeth, Deoghar, Behar, for the year 1927, is to hand. The public are already aware that this Vidyapeeth is a residential High School for Hindu boys, and it has been trying to help each of its pupils to grow up a healthy and efficient citizen by taking special care to develop the physique and culture the heart. The curriculum generally followed is that of the Calcutta University with a slight variation in the lower forms. Particular stress is laid on the study of Sanskrit, History and Elementary Science as well as on Music, First Aid, Hand-work, Nature-study and other allied subjects. Religious, physical and practical training forms an important part of their education also. To stimulate a spirit of social service among the boys a Night School was run during the year for the neighbouring labour class boys through the co-operation of the teachers and the older boys of the Vidyapeeth. The formation of the "Boys' Sovak Sangha" by the Vidyapeeth boys also proved a great success. The boys were taught up to the 2nd class with a competent staff of teachers and the number of the alumni rose from 53 to 60 in the year. The construction of a dormitory and a dining hall was completed at a cost of Rs. 5,489-2-9. The Vidyapeeth is now seriously handicapped for want of up-to-date educational equipments and permanent funds for engaging a number of paid teachers with special qualifications and for maintaining indigent students. We sincerely hope that the appeal of the Secretary for adequate financial support will not go in vain.

The First General Report of Sri Ramakrishna Mission in Ceylon for the year 1927 gives a brief account of the works done from its different centres in the Island. (i) The monastic members of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Trincomalie carried on their preaching and educational work. The management of the Trincomalie Hindu Boys' English School and the Trincomalie Hindu Boys' Tamil School was transferred to Swami Vipulananda in June 1925. Moreover, an Association known as "The Sri Ramakrishna Educational Association" was organised to render all possible assistance in this educational work. Under the present management, the schools have made rapid progress, and the English School has now been registered as a Higher Grade School working up to the Cambridge Senior School Certificate Examination and Matriculation Examination of London. To provide better accommodation, the work of extending the buildings has been taken up. Besides furniture and general equipment, a laboratory for the teaching of elementary experimental science is now urgently needed. We hope the public would respond to the appeal for funds.

(ii) The activities of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Batticaloa have evoked much public interest and sympathy as well. The Management of five Vernacular Schools in the Batticaloa District was transferred to Swami Vipulananda in 1925. At present all the schools are self-supporting and have on their rolls an aggregate of 914 pupils and 26 teachers. A separate Girls' School under the designation of the Sri Sarada Vidyalaya was also started in October last. It is gratifying to note that Swami Vipulananda has received a gift of a building known as "the Vivekananda Hall" and the land on which it stands, of an aggregate value of Rs. 10,000. A Hindu English School has been proposed to be opened in the Batticaloa town and a strongly Executive Committee has been formed to collect funds and to carry on all work in connection with this proposed educational institution.

(iii) The educational and preaching work of the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Jaffna is none the less satisfactory. With a view to provide facilities for a more complete and fuller training of the youth of the island, it has been proposed to work up the existing Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai, to a full-plledged free residential educational institution. A Students' Home for orphans and poor students was started in 1926. The report of its activities for nine months from June 6th, 1926 to March 6th, 1927 is also to our hand. Boarding, lodging, tuition fees, and other educational facilities are provided free. The boys are taught to be manly and self-reliant. Attention is paid to their physical, moral and spiritual growth. The Managing Committee intends to provide accommodation for at least 100 students. It conveys its heart-felt thanks to all friends and well-wishers for the kind support extended to the Home and hopes that such support will continue in future.

The Bionnial Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Karimganj, Sylhet, for the years 1332 and 1333 B.S. is to our hand. It shows a good record of its philanthropic works during the years under review. The Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary of the Samity treated 841 and 955 patients, of whom 430 and 520 were new cases respectively, during the years. The Samity, moreover, rendered house to house relief during the cholera and the small-pox epidemics in the town and sent pecuniary aids on the occasion of the Midnapore flood. Besides, it ran one Library consisting of about 464 books and held Sunday sittings for the study of the Bhagavad Gita and the lives of various saints of India. The night-school for the depressed classes had to be abandoned for various local disadvantages, but the Samity proposes to restart the same in a more convenient place. The Samity

stands in need of more lands and houses for the extension of its sphere of philanthropic works and a permanent fund for the maintenance of its workers. The public, we doubt not, will substantially help this useful institution by their contributions.

We have received a copy of the Annual Report of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, for the year 1927 from its Hon. Secretary, and we are glad to find that during the twenty-five years of its existence, the Society has grown to be one of the most useful institutions in Ceylon. The Society's Library consisted of a number of 1,055 books, and the reading public were afforded ample opportunity to read the Monthlies, Weeklies and Dailies in the Society's Reading Room. The Society, moreover, conducted a monthly magazine of its own, named "The Vivekanandan". Besides lectures on various topics, the usual classes for the study of *Thirukkural* and *Nannool* and the classes started by Swami Avinashananda were held regularly on Saturdays and Sunday-mornings respectively. The Vidyalayam run by the Society is one of the most flourishing institutions with which the name of Swami Vivekananda is associated. But the School-hall is uncomfortably crowded, and apart from the need for more furniture, a separate building for the school is absolutely necessary. Moreover, the present building of the Society itself is too old and funds are immediately needed for a building worthy of the position the Society occupies in the public life of the Hindus of Ceylon. We are indeed glad to learn that the Society rendered useful service to the Kathirgama pilgrims, and presented Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of his visit to the Society with a decent purse of Rs. 2,178 and odd. The Society appeals to the members, subscribers and the sympathisers to contribute their quota of pecuniary help for a smooth working of this institution and we hope the appeal would be generously responded to.

The Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar, for the year 1927 shows a good record of work done by its workers. The total number of in-door patients admitted into the Sevashrama Hospital during the year under review was 781, of whom 748 were cured and discharged; 8 left treatment, 2 were taken by I. D. H., 29 died and 12 were under treatment at the close of the year. Altogether 46,852 patients of whom 25,715 were old cases, were treated in the Outdoor Dispensary of the Sevashrama. It further conducted a free Night School attached to it for the local depressed classes. The Library contained a total number of 1,828 religious books, 28 Monthlies, 6 Weeklies and two Dailies and was open to all. The Sevashrama organised a relief-work during the last Kumbha-Mela held at Hardwar in the month of April, 1927 and rendered splendid service towards the mitigation of the sufferings of the sick and the pilgrims. In short the importance of such a philanthropic institution in one of the most sacred places of India can hardly be exaggerated. The following are the urgent needs of the Sevashrama :—(1) Workers' quarters. (2) A Building for the night school for the depressed classes, attached to the Sevashrama. (3) A Guest House or Dharamsala. (4) A Rest House for the friends and relations of pilgrim-in-door patients. (5) A permanent endowment Fund for the Sevashrama. (6) Resources for equipment and general maintenance of the Sevashrama. We hope the Secretary's appeal for funds would not go in vain.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’.”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER



त्वमेव विष्णुश्चतुराननस्त्वं, त्वमेव मृत्युर्धनदस्त्वमेव ।

त्वमेव सूक्ष्मः पुरुषोऽव्ययस्त्वं, त्वमेव सृद्धात्परमश्च सृद्धम् ॥

व्यक्तस्त्वमेव प्रकृतिस्त्वमेव, त्वमेव भूमिः सलिलं त्वमेव ।

त्वमेव वह्निः पवनस्त्वमेव, त्वमेव यज्ञो नियमस्त्वमेव ॥

त्वमेव भूतं भवनश्च भव्यं, त्वमेव सर्वः प्रकरोषि धर्मं ।

त्वमेव सर्वस्य चराचरस्य, पृथग् विभक्ता प्रलये च गोता ॥

ततः सर्वे वयं भीतास्त्वामेव शरणं गताः ॥

Oh Lord, Thou art the all-pervading Deity, and the Creator sublime; Thou art Death and the Treasurer divine; Thou art the spirit, dwelling in all, and subtle and immutable; Thou art the subtlest of the subtle; Thou art the manifest and the unmanifest; Thou art the earth, water, fire and air; Thou art the sacrifice and the rule thereof;

Thou art the past, present and future; Oh mighty Revealer of religion, Thou maker of diversity of the world entire, and the Preserver of it in the end, Thou art all-in-all; therefore, in sacred awe, we do seek refuge in Thee !

SKANDAPURANAM

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Disciple : Maharaj, some meditates in the heart, and some, on the head; I myself do exactly as I see one outside—as I just see you now. Of these different ways of meditation which is the proper one, sir?

Swami : The process of meditation differs in accordance with the differences in Sadhana. Ordinarily it is better to meditate in the heart. The body should be considered as the temple and God residing in it. Whenever the mind becomes steady through continued, spiritual practices, then alone can a man have a vision of his Istam (chosen Deity); and wherever he does realise Him—side, back or heart—exactly in that place can he then carry on his meditation with ease.

Through persistence in meditation the first experience that a man gets is the perception of a hallowed effulgence, and simultaneously with that experience or a while later, a kind of higher and nobler joy is felt by him, and his mind does not like to move onward leaving that joy. But if he pushes on his enterprise still further, he next experiences the effulgence solidified, now his mind tending to merge itself in that solid mass of consciousness. Sometimes again, the mind can be annihilated by continuously hearing the long, sacred sound of Pranava (or Oum, the sound symbol of the Brahman).

Spiritual realisation knows no bounds! The more you know, the more yet remains to be known. It is unbounded, infinite! By experiencing a little of effulgence or so many think, that is the end; but the fact is quite otherwise. According to some again, where the mind ceases its functionings, there only true religion begins; but others opine that is the end.

D. : Generally we find that the mind, after making some progress along the spiritual line cannot advance further : it stops; what makes it so, venerable sir?

S. : The weakness of the mind ! Yes, it is solely responsible for this mental torpitude. According to its 'capacity' 'the mind moves on to a certain extent; then it stops ; it cannot advance more. And all minds are not of the same 'capacity', although it can be developed, and it must be. Sri Ramakrishna has said that through Brahmacharya the mind can be strengthened more and more ; and a strong mind never vacillates at the slight disturbance of lust and anger. To such a mind these passions are simply trifles. To it comes the firm conviction that these can do it no harm. Many are the pitfalls that stand in the way of Sadhana ; and the external ones are only a negligible minority compared to the internal. Hence the injunction for Asanam (sitting posture) and Mudra (position of fingers) in religious worship.

D. : Maharaj, it occurs to me at times that you do call everyone of us to you and inquire about the extent of our spiritual progress and also the difficulty thereof if any, and encourage and enthuse us abundantly.—**B.** says, whether we can actually help our fellow-man or no, we should not lack behind in giving encouragement to him all the while saying that we are at his back and he need fear no harm ; and that thereby the dormant lion of the self shall rise up and all fear shall go. Yes sir, your encouragement takes away all fear and apprehension and makes us truly bold and uncompromising.

D. : Do you know, my child, such attitude of mind does not always come. At times, of course, the mind rests at such a state that I feel I should entreat and implore you all one by one, if necessary even by touching your feet and say : "Do this, my son, do this for God's sake." But again, I think : "Who am I to instruct you in all this ; the Lord is there ; and as He makes us do, so is done. And whom to ask ! The Lord Himself is the cause ; the Lord Himself is the instrument, and He Himself is all ! Again, why should people take my words even though

spoken to ! But then you know, my boy, if the inspiration comes from within then people do take them and follow !

Strive on, my son, strive on and on, and do not waste a moment of time. At the close of a day Sri Ramakrishna wept and prayed : "Mother, another day is gone, I am not yet blest with thy vision !" Even so yearn after God, my child, and be lost in Him !

THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA MOVEMENT—I

The history of every race has always witnessed a series of movements, both social and religious, whenever it has needed an adjustment on material and spiritual planes. In India similar movements have, of late, as in the past, come into existence in response to the spiritual demands of the people. And of all such movements of the present day, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, embodying as it does the spiritual consciousness of the newly awakened race, seems to constitute one of the most significant historical events of the 19th century. The forces working for centuries together deepened and intensified with the process of time and compressed themselves into the personality of a single individual whose silent and unostentatious life of intense spiritual culture on the eve of a new epoch stood as an eloquent interpretation of Indian thought and genius to the humanity at large. The advent of Sri Ramakrishna was indeed a historical necessity. It was a period of cultural disintegration and economic prostration, an age of intellectual stagnation and social disruption in India, and an era of scientific discovery and Realistic philosophy in the world outside. India stood at the parting of the ways. An intimate touch with the Western world opened the gate for an influx of many conflicting ideas that began to force themselves upon the attention of the Indian people and led them unconsciously to hug the complexity of Occidental mode of life and thought. It is the unfailing testimony of history that whenever any novel principle of life, social or political, is held by any conquering race before the vision of a subject nation, the latter, with the frantic zeal of a drowning man, grasps at that

sparkling philosophy of human destiny, without even pausing to consider how far it has its sanction in the collective spirit of the race or is conducive to its ultimate well-being. The individuality of the race is lost sight of in the alluring beauty of the in-coming ideas, and the entire population runs helter-skelter after the simulacrum of the new idealism. An unprecedented frenzy for reform and change,—an indecent madness for a thorough overhauling of the entire structure of social and political life, seizes upon the imagination of the people, and the whole host are swept under the stimulus of a sentimental urge into the realm of fanciful ideas that have no moral basis in the cultural instincts of the people. This has more often than not been the unfortunate experience in the life of most of the subject races in the world, and the case of India is nothing but a replica of such a tragic event in the succession of historical phenomena.

The contact of India with the outside world is not a novel occurrence but is as old as the history of the Indian race itself. But the difference between the past and the present is so sharply marked that it needs no philosophical expatiation. India was independent in the past and did never experience the bitterness of economic atrophy as now; and naturally, the cultural impact of the West could but rarely cut deep into the shore of Indian life and sweep away the sacred treasures of the land before it. On the otherhand, it only added to the tone and vigour of the organic life of the nation and satisfied the demands in so far as the people needed a *healthy* readjustment in the varied spheres of their activity. But the modern life of India tells quite a different tale, and the influx of Western culture into the vortex of Indian thought, coming in the wake of political subjection created an insipid mentality eager to satisfy itself with whatever was dangled down before it as a tempting bait. In an unlucky hour the Occidental ideas stole a march upon the unwary Indians and ultimately lured them into a position of utter helplessness through a silent process of intellectual, social and economic exploitation. Every 'cultured' Indian considered it to be his proud privilege to shine in the borrowed feathers of outlandish manners and customs, dress and habits, and any revolt against these prevalent notions and practices was labelled as a mark of rank vulgarity and barbarism. This was the state of India. The

wave of Indian life thus receded back to its lowest level under the pressure of European Imperialism. It was at this critical juncture of Indian history that Sri Ramakrishna, one of the greatest spiritual figures in the history of mankind, appeared on the platform of Indian life as an embodiment of India's spiritual heritage and stood as a mighty challenge to the materialistic philosophy of the West. The soul of India was indeed stirred to its inmost depth and quivered anew into a historic expression. The cosmic thought-forces of the entire race compressed themselves into the single organic life of that great spiritual being who stood before humanity with all the majesty and grace of India's culture to bring all the straying souls back to her catholic fold and to impart a new orientation to the disruptive forces governing the thought and action of the world outside.

• Sri Ramakrishna needed a powerful exponent of his life and message,—a mouthpiece to interpret to the self-forgetful Indians and to the rest of humanity the accumulated wisdom of India's culture that he himself embodied in his synthetic personality. And this was fulfilled in the life of Swami Vivekananda. The advent of this heroic figure was no less significant than that of his illustrious Master. The meeting of the two souls like the union of the two historic personages of the past—Sri Krishna and Arjuna—on the eve of the great battle of Kurukshetra, produced a gigantic spiritual wave that has swept over the world and is still carrying humanity before its mighty urge. Rightly has M. Romain Rolland remarked in *The Response of Asia*: “The religious firmament of India was illuminated by two stars of primary grandeur, suddenly appearing—or re-appearing after centuries—two miracles of spirit: Ramakrishna, the ‘mad man’ of God—who embraced in his love all forms of Divinity: and his heroic disciple, Vivekananda whose torrential energy had re-awakened in his exhausted people the God of action, the God of the Gita.” The sacred mantle of Sri Ramakrishna fell upon the Swami, and like a faithful servant and friend, he carried out the mandate of the Master to the last breath of his life. His discipleship at the holy feet of that great soul endowed him with a vision to realise the synthetic value of human aspirations and qualified him for the noble task of revolutionising the thought-world of humanity. He understood where the heart of

India truly beat and what role she was to play in the moulding of human destiny. The heroic band of followers that clustered round the sacred standard of Sri Ramakrishna was afterwards organised into a dynamic force in the country through the instrumentality of the spiritual genius of Swami Vivekananda for the fulfilment of the divine message of their Teacher and Guide. The country needed the guidance of such an organised body, dedicated to the service of the mother-land and consecrated at the altar of humanity,—a body of Sannyasins who should be ready to devote their spiritual illumination to the uplift of their fellow-men, and whose whole life would be an eloquent exemplification of the great truth embodied in the words of the Swami:—आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च ।—“Personal illumination and the good of the world.”

Swami Vivekananda was born not merely for his personal liberation but for the redemption of the entire mankind. Though blessed with the highest Bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the great Swami was not allowed by the Master to spend his life in that state of ecstatic Beatitude but was commanded to lay the accumulated wealth of his spiritual attainment at the feet of mankind, especially of his benighted countrymen whose poverty and ignorance stood in sad contrast with the opulence and progress of the world outside. He visualised the true theme of Indian life and knew what was needed to carry the straying souls once more to their rallying point. “I see,” said the Swami, “that each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality, as in England. Artistic life in another, and so on. In India, religious life forms the centre, the key-note of the whole music of national life, and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through transmission of centuries—that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt.”

• Swami Vivekananda poured his whole soul into the country's cause and inaugurated a movement that, true to his sacred mission, has crystallised to-day into a dynamic religious institution influencing the social and spiritual aspirations of the country. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement is thus a legacy of that great Indian genius who illustrated and represented in him the living principles of Indian life and culture, that stand as the

background of this sacred movement.* And it is needless to point out that a resume of the teachings of that great soul is tantamount to the unfoldment of the truths that the movement embodies and is trying to actualise in its varied activities.

Swami Vivekananda was a patriot and a saint in one. In him patriotism was deified into the highest saintship, and loving service to fellow-men, into true worship. For true patriotism was with him nothing short of the transfiguration of a man's own personality into the soul of his people, rising and sinking with them. Truly has Sister Nivedita remarked : " The thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He neither used the word ' nationality ' nor proclaimed an era of ' nation-making '. ' Man-making ' was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his motherland. Like some delicately poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo . . . His country's religion, history, geography, ethnology, poured from his lips in an inexhaustible stream. . . Like some great spiral emotion, its lowest circles held fast in love of soil and love of nature ; its next embracing every possible association of race, experience, history, and thought ; and the whole converging and centring upon a single definite point, was thus Swami's worship of his own land. And the point in which it was focussed was the conviction that India was not old and effete, as her critics had supposed but young, ripe with potentiality, and standing, at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the threshold of even greater developments than she had known in the past." But it is painful to find that *patriotism* has become a very cheap commodity in the modern market of Indian politics. Any one who is able to spin out a specious ' *philosophy of activism* ' and denounce most irrationally even the sacred duties and idealism that do not square with his cherished views and narrow outlook, is hall-marked as the hierophant of nationalism and idolised as the greatest of patriots in the land ! India would have been emancipated long ago, had gasconade and tongue-doughtiness been deemed as the sufficient passport to the temple of Freedom. But fortunately it is not so. Says Swami Vivekananda : " My would-be patriots !

do you feel ? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and sages, have become next-door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel that millions are starving, and millions have been starving for ages ? . . . Does it make you restless ? Does it make you sleepless ? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats ? Has it made you almost mad ? Have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your dearest ones, your property, even your own bodies ? . . . *That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.*" These are the words not of a sentimentae callow youngster having the hardihood of posing himself as an accredited leader of Indian aspiration without the legitimate sanction of the sacred cultural idealism of the land, far less the spiritual vision of a patriot-saint, but of a soul whose whole being was a fire of spirituality and who knew no rest till the end of his life owing to the gnawing agony of his heart at the helpless state of his motherland. Swamiji has demonstrated in his life that to be a true patriot one must identify his whole being with the throbbing life of the national organism and shed his life-blood drop by drop in the silent and devoted service of the country's cause.

The Brahnavadin once remarked : " The young visionary from his very boyhood felt that Indian men and women must grow in moral worth and strength, that only in a great, free and united India would Indians find light and life for the service of humanity,—an India free from corrupting facts, from a crushing materialism and passion for the finite, and united by a roused historic consciousness, united in the presence of an age-long spiritual culture,—and that only in such an India would the message of his Master be a living force to make her stand before the world as the spiritual teacher of humanity." Sri Ramakrishna came to establish Dharma in the world but Dharma has no meaning outside of society. The spiritual and the social must become identical. Swami Vivekananda found to his mortification that the society had become the veritable catacomb of healthy aspirations. The tyranny of the privileged few and the high-caste people, perpetrated without the least qualms of conscience upon the ignorant masses of India for ages ; the unbridled reign of outworn customs and usages, of evils and hideous practices in

society ; the canker of Don't-touchism creating an unbridgeable gulf between the high and the low ; the rank illiteracy of the three hundred million souls of India prevailing at a time when the rest of humanity were making rapid strides in every walk of human thought and culture ; the political thralldom and economic exploitation of the once opulent land of his birth at the hands of an alien race ; and above all, the utter forgetfulness of Indian culture and spiritual idealism, and the blind acceptance of the Occidental philosophy of life as the determinant of Indian destiny, —all these rolled one after the other with kaleidoscopic quickness before his spiritual vision and rendered him entirely restless throughout his life. But the remedy he evolved was quite characteristic of that great soul. He went straight deep into the heart of the disease itself, and his remedial measures necessarily differ from those of many upstart reformers whose social or political obsession does not permit them to see anything beyond the tip of their nose. The history of India, social or political, is the history of a silent process of evolution of the spiritual forces of Indian life. Religion is the very soul of India's growth and expansion, as it has entered into the very foundation of her national existence. "Our method," said the Swami, "is very easily described. It simply consists in reasserting the national life. Buddha preached renunciation. India heard, and in six centuries she reached her greatest height. The secret lies there. The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself. The banner spiritual cannot be raised too high in this country. In it alone is salvation."

His method of reforming society was not destructive but constructive. He visualised the spiritual destiny of his country and, armed with the dynamic principle of life he fell like a bomb-shell upon the society to rouse it to a conscious life of progressive humanity. He once wrote to an Indian friend from America : "All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of holding religion accountable for all the horrors of priest-craft and degeneration, and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure ; what was the result ? Failure ! Beginning from Buddha down to Raja Rammohan Roy, every one made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down

religion and caste all together, and failed. But inspite of all the ravings of the priests, caste is simply a crystallised social institution, which after doing its service is now filling the atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by giving back to the people their lost social individuality...Freedom is the only condition of growth, take that off, the result is degeneration." Freedom, he declared, is the *sine qua non* of the spontaneous growth of human society; and this message of freedom, spiritual, social and political, came out from him as a result of his realisation of the oneness of humanity—the very cardinal principle of Hindu religion. The high and the low, the touchable and the untouchable, the Brahmin and the Pariah, all stand on the common platform of the Vedantic conception of the unity of the soul and the community of spiritual aspiration. To divide mankind into artificial compartments of social interests and privileges on the basis of the accident of birth is to pull down to the dust the whole fabric of Indian philosophy and to negate the the very principle of growth of our collective life. Swami Vivekananda's life-long endeavour was to rehabilitate India's ancient idealism in consonance with the healthy and progressive elements of modern cultural forces and to open to mankind the vista of spiritual freedom embodied in the Vedantic doctrine of equality of man. For he realised that without a due recognition of this basic principle of our cultural philosophy, no amount of sentimental rignarole, or political shibboleth would find a living response in Indian hearts and succeed in bringing about the desired resurgence in the varied fields of our activity.

Social or political reconstruction of our land must be based, he says, on the sound bed-rock of the spiritual instinct of the race ; for spirituality is the very soul of Indian thought and movement. " In India social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring ; and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants,—its spirituality . . . Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. *Before flooding India with scientific or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.*" This the Swami has pointed out in nounce rtain terms to his countrymen, and the first work that demands our attention, says he, is that the most

wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our Puranas and other scriptures—must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries, from the forest, from the possession of selected bodies of people and scattered broadcast all over the land, so that these truths may run like fire all over the country, from north to south, and east to west, from the Himalayas to Comorin, from Sindh to the Brahmaputra. The sacred scriptures of the Hindus proclaiming as they do in thousand and one voice the divinity of man and the oneness of humanity throw wide open to all, irrespective of caste or creed, the gateway to the spiritual wisdom of the ancient seers. And it is not too much to emphasise that unless the socially suppressed and politically emasculated masses of India are awakened to the consciousness of their potential divinity and to the infinite possibilities of their nature, any empty bunkum, as is the forte of some political demagogues in India, shall only stultify their 'neo-philosophy of activism' without actually moulding Indian aspirations into historic landmarks of positive advancement. Swami Vivekananda viewed the problems of India and suggested remedies thereof, not from the standpoint of a self-constituted dictator but from the position of a humble servant of humanity, in whom the Vedantic conception of the oneness of life was concretised into the living ideal of service for self-illumination as well as for the good of the world. He saw the Narayana in all, in the sick and the poor, the Pariah and the inarticulate masses of his poverty-stricken land, and that is why his heart beat with each throb of all the hearts that ached, known and unknown. He has bequeathed to the young men and the unborn generations of his country the sacred task of educating, feeding and elevating the voiceless millions of India. " I may perish of cold or hunger in this land (America), but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Go now this minute to the temple of Parthasarathi, and before Him who was friend to the poor and lowly cowherds of Gokula, who never shrank to embrace the Pariah Guhaka, who accepted the invitation of a prostitute in preference to that of the nobles and saved her in His incarnation as Buddha—yea, down on your faces before Him, and make a sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for them, for whom He comes from time to time, whom He loves

above all, the poor, the lowly, the oppressed. Vow there to devote your whole life to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day."

The suppression and persecution of womanhood in India was, in the opinion of Swami Vivekananda, one of the most potent reasons for the demoralisation of Indian life; and in one of his letters he indignantly remarked: "Why is it that we are slavish, miserable and dead? . . . Do you know who is the real Shakti-worshipper? It is he who knows that God is omnipotent force in the universe, and sees in women the manifestation of that force . . . What are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral! What does our Manu enjoin? 'Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons.' As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. What are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now." But only inauguration of reformatory measures will not herald an era of progress and national advancement unless education on truly national lines be imparted to open out before the people the hideousness of the social evils so long nurtured in the arena of social life. Moreover, a nation whose higher aspirations have been smothered and vision of a better condition of existence has almost been befogged by a perpetual sense of helplessness arising out of poverty and political dependence, cannot be expected to rise to the full stature of nationhood unless it is properly fed and stimulated into a conscious being by means of proper education. "A country," says the Swami, "where millions of people live on flowers of the Mohua plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmans suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell! Is that a religion or devil's dance? . . . We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot . . . Suppose some disinterested Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education, and

seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the Chandala, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories—can't that bring forth good in time ? . . . The poor are too poor to come to schools and path-salas We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the people its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside." But the Swami, in spite of his innate love for indigenous culture and a passionate yearning for the uplift of his sunken countrymen, was not a man of antediluvian ideas but a rational progressivist advocating a happy synthesis of cultures of the East and the West without detriment to the individuality of Indian thought and aspiration. For he urges that ' what we should have is what we have not, perhaps what our forefathers even had not ;—that which the Yavanas had ;—that impelled by the life-vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo of Europe the electric flow of the tremendous power, vivifying the whole world. We want that. We want that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-sacrifice, that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive vision infinitely projected forward ; and we want that intense spirit of activity (Rajas) which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot.' Himself an embodiment of spiritual strength, his message was a triumphant call to rise to the radiance of the spirit. His soul caught the national cadence and began to vibrate in unison with the mother-heart. In him the Vedanta became dynamic and the accumulated culture of centuries became aggressive and instinct with new life and meaning.

His was a multifold personality ; for ' in the make-up of the Swami's temperament, one can see glimpses of the intellect of Sankara, the heart of Buddha, the realisation of Sri Chaitanya, and the spiritual fire of Guru Nanak combined with the mildness of Jesus the Christ and the apostolic eloquence of Saint Paul.' His love for the countless millions of his own soil expanded into the infinitude of spiritual solicitude for the well-being of humanity

grovelling in the sink of materialism. A great harmoniser of religions and a synthesiser of the highest ideals of knowledge, devotion, work and yoga, Swami Vivekananda proclaimed to the people that universal Religion has nothing to do with eclecticism and syncretism but stands for the grand harmony of all apparently conflicting thoughts and beliefs which like different streams having their sources in different places and ultimately mingling their water in the sea, lead men through various ways to the one eternal Truth. The Dvaita, the Vishistadvaita and the Advaita are but the three phases or stages in the gradual ascent of the human soul, which reaches the highest goal in the perception of Oneness. In fact, the depth of his spiritual realisation enabled him to see everything from quite a new angle of vision and to meet all contradictions in the light of the unity existing behind the manifoldness of the world. With the expanded vision of a seer he came to realise that without the help of 'practical Islam,' theories of Vedantism, however fine and sublime they might be, were entirely of no use to the vast mass of mankind. The people must be taught that the different religions are but the varied expressions of the one eternal Religion and that there is no conflict in the essentials between the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. "For our land," said the Swami, "a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body."

He felt the divine call from within to carry the sacred message of his Master to the world abroad not merely to uphold the cultural greatness of India but to deliver the much-needed spiritual pebulum—the accumulated wisdom of the Eastern world—to the expectant humanity in the West. The triumphant note of harmony of all religions, the central symphony of Hindu thought, as struck by the Swami in the great Parliament of Religions at Chicago thirty-six years back, even now rings clear and distinct in our ears and is gaining in volume and intensity with the roll of time. He read the meaning of his Master's message to him in a light that assumed new proportions with added knowledge and thought. The successful mission of the Swami Vivekananda in the West as the apostle of universal brotherhood and the exponent

of the eternal glory of Hinduism opened up a fresh channel for the interchange of thought and culture between the East and the West and raised India in no small measure in the estimation of the civilised races of the world. His imagination transcended the narrow geographical limits and embraced the entire world in its broad and catholic sweep. The heart of humanity has indeed responded to the clarion-call of the ochre-clad Monk of India, who as the accredited champion of Oriental culture voiced forth to the Western world the accumulated wisdom of the East. He left no stone unturned during the brief span of his life to reinstate the dethroned Mother of his heart in the native glory of her culture and wisdom and to spiritualise the human relation between the East and the West by throwing open the door of fraternal sympathy and cultural understanding. The Swami has passed away, but the spirit he infused into the movement still lives in the regenerated India as well as in the steady march of human thought and activity. The creative forces springing from the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement have indeed come to stay, as they must, in India and the world outside, and it is only a question of time to see the consummation of the ideals that this new spiritual movement stands for. It would be our endeavour in the next issue to point out to our readers in brief the gradual expansion of the movement under the fostering care of the devoted fellow-workers and followers of the great patriot-saint, Swami Vivekananda.

RENUNCIATION AS AN IDEAL IN LIFE

By Brahmachari Purna Chaitanya

A spirit of dispassion for all objects of the senses, and a desire to get beyond the range of worries of worldly concerns have always been the marked features of men for whom religion has become a reality. A quest has begun in their case for something beyond the grasp of the senses, and day by day they feel that the bondages of the world are becoming more and more disagreeable for them. In the case of some this feeling becomes so intensified that they find it no longer possible to remain within the bounds of worldly life. They are then said to renounce,—which means the giving up of the worldly life in order to devote oneself entirely to the life of the spirit. In fact a truly spiritual life is impossible without the practice of renunciation in some form or

other, and some of the world's greatest spiritual figures like Buddha, Christ, Chaitanya, and Sri Ramakrishna have been uncompromising upholders of this doctrine. In the history of nations also we find that during periods of great spiritual fruitfulness the spirit of renunciation permeated the thinking section of the people. History records that in the Upanishadic age, and much more in Buddhist times innumerable men renounced the worldly life in order to devote themselves entirely to a life of spiritual pursuit. In later times also during the days of Sankara and Sri Chaitanya groups of monastic bodies, upholding a life of renunciation came into existence in our land. In the history of Europe too, we note during the middle ages the rise of many orders of monks, fired by the most uncompromising type of renunciation. It is only in modern times when the mind of Europe has been emancipated, as some may put it, from the shackles of religion that it has lost its respect for the ideal of renunciation.

This lowering of the ideal of renunciation in the estimation of people is not confined to Europe alone. Leaving aside those who have no faith in God or spiritual life, we find even in India at present a number of people considering the ideal of renunciation as a menace, or a source of trouble to society. In India they had their counterparts in ancient times also. There were in ancient times the followers of the ritualistic portions of the Vedas, who depreciated the value of renunciation as an ideal to be followed in life. According to them the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world as well as of the heavenly regions constituted the summum bonum of human existence, and the ideal of renunciation was only an aberration of the soul or at best an unnecessary and self-imposed hardship on a man's life. Their modern prototypes, though differing from them in their philosophy of life, hold views not much differing from theirs. They admit, however, that attachment for sense-pleasures must be avoided; but they hold that renouncing the worldly life is not the way to achieve that end. They point out the lives of some of the greatest teachers of the world like Sri Krishna, or Mohammad or King Janaka who lived in the world in a spirit of intense non-attachment, and say that it is their examples alone that men should strive to follow. If the highest spiritual experiences can be had even in this worldly life, they do not understand why one should renounce it and follow the monastic ideal. Hence a life of absolute renunciation is not a necessity; nay, it is a negation of the spiritual possibilities of life, and even reprehensible in the opinion of some! They point to the back-sliders in monastic life, to the idleness that is rampant among them, and to the waste of energy and resources that society has to incur on account of their presence.

These are the charges levelled against the the monastic ideal, by its uncompromising opponents. We shall here consider how far these charges are real. Looking at the monastic ideal through the perspective of history, we find that both in the East and the West it has been one of the greatest sources of social well-being. In India in the days of Buddhist ascendancy, when the monastic ideal was most widely diffused in society, the monks stood as the pillars of philanthropy and learning. It was their intrepidity that carried the religion of the Buddha beyond the bounds of India, and made it a world force. Turning to Hinduism, we find that most of those Rishis who produced the Upanishads were followers of the monkish ideal. The later-day reformers of Hinduism like Sankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, and others were mostly monks, and the whole fabric of Hindu society, and Hindu religion, as we find them at present, have been formed by them and their disciples. In Europe also the contribution of monks to European civilisation in the Middle Ages was in no way insignificant. At a time when the laity was steeped in ignorance, and the kings and nobles indulged in the utmost excesses of brutality, the monks stood for the cause of learning and social order. They were the only friends and sympathisers of the poor and the destitute; and the discontent among the peasants, and the rebellions that followed the abolition of monasteries in many European countries during the days of the Reformation bear ample testimony to these facts. Not only this, the monks were in many cases pioneers of agriculture even, clearing forests and jungles and bringing vast areas under cultivation. Such a record of social service falsifies the view that the monks have been an idle lot or a social burden in the past.

This review of the history of the monastic ideal in its relation to secular life is not however intended to show that the glory of a life of renunciation lies in the amount of work that its adherents are able to turn up. In that case a hard-worked horse or a bull will have more to its credit than most human beings. Social service they may do to some extent as an aid to their spiritual progress, or after having attained their goal, out of sympathy for those who are lagging behind. The true test of their greatness lies in the purity they manifest, the intensity with which they are able to strive after the spiritual ideal, and the realisations they attain to in the course of their lives. Whether a life of renunciation is in any way more conducive to these ends than the family life has itself been open to question as suggested before; it has moreover been condemned, by some as a social disease and an organised system of idleness. That it was not anything of this sort when it was at its best has been proved by the reference to the history of monasticism. If abuses have crept into it in modern times, or at

any time before, it is not the ideal that deserves condemnation. At the present day in our country it is poverty that drives away many to assume the garb of a monk ; for they expect to gain an easy living from the indiscriminate charity of our people. The ignorance, credulity, and degeneracy of the masses and the householders have not a little to do in encouraging charlatanism and miracle-mongering among monks. Thus we see that these so-called abuses are due not to any inherent weakness of the ideal—for we still see its supreme glory in those who are true to it—but to the short-comings and poverty of the society. The right way for reform is to rectify these and not to condemn the ideal of renunciation as a whole.

Now we come to the objection, already mentioned, that renunciation in its absolute sense, *i. e.*, renouncing the family life, is not necessary to attain spiritual illumination. As instances to this are pointed out the examples of such persons as Sri Krishna or King Janaka or Mohammad. It is true that these great men lived in the world till the end of their lives; but one thing to be noted, however, is that they had already attained to spiritual illumination before they entered into the thick of life. Sri Krishna was the full manifestation of the Divinity itself, and the illumination of his divine glory was with him even from his childhood. Whatever he did in this world was only for the blessing of his devotees or for the benefit of the world. Both Janaka and Mohammad had already reached spiritual illumination before they entered into the world, and their subsequent lives were devoted entirely to the service of the world, or the fulfilment of the divine command. Are the ordinary men of this world, who spend their whole lives in the pursuit of selfish ends, in any way a comparison to these spiritual prodigies, and are the former more fitted to follow the example of the latter than a man of average abilities is to undergo the same system of education as a man of genius? The life of renunciation on the other hand affords a man of the required mentality suitable environment for growth in his spiritual infancy, and when he has considerably grown in it, carries him on to the logical conclusion of his ideal. It is not however meant to show that the life of non-attachment is of no value as an ideal and that all men are to renounce the world at once. Before a man is fit for a life of renunciation, it provides him with a practical ideal which carries him to the door of a higher life. When a person has reached that stage a life of renunciation will ordinarily be found more conducive to rapid spiritual development. For it provides him with better facilities for the practice of Brahmacharya and meditation, which constitute the two of the most essential and unavoidable conditions of spiritual growth. Thus a person on

whom real spiritual life has dawned will be able to make better progress by following a life of renunciation than if he remained in the world. Moreover it should also be mentioned in this connection that if we analyse the mentality of those who deny this claim of the ideal of renunciation, it will be seen that most of them are only trying to cover their own weak points, or are labouring under a sense of egoism which prevents them from admitting the existence of an ideal higher than their own. Anyway, the modest claim that renunciation as an ideal in life is highly beneficial at least to a large section of spiritual aspirants is an undeniable fact.

It has been often urged that the ideal of renunciation fosters a sort of parasitism in society. As the monks, do not earn money but live on the charity of others, they are considered a burdon on society, feeding on the resources of the people without giving anything in return. But is the capacity to earn money the sole criterion of social usefulness? If by production is meant only the production of articles useful for the satisfaction of hunger, thirst and other physical needs, then surely the monk is a parasite but along with him have to be placed in the same category almost all other classes of society except the agricultural and industrial labourers. But if production is only interpreted to mean the creation of utilities, then the monk has his own services to contribute to the welfare of the society. In the first place he presents before society by his life a practical example of the ideal he represents, and keeps the people in mind that spiritual illumination is the ultimate goal of life. The ideal of non-attachment, however beneficial it may be for a few individuals, is not sufficiently tangible to inspire the common run of mankind, and it is the ideal life of the monk alone that will serve this purpose. In religious bodies which can boast of a band of devoted monks, the general level of spirituality is always higher than in societies without them. What is more, it is the life and realisations of the monk that stand as the best commentary on as well as proof of the spiritual facts that are mentioned in the scriptures, and that serve to dispel the doubts that may gather in the minds of men about the reality and usefulness of the spiritual state. The example of a group of really intelligent and sincere men who have given up all that is generally considered near and dear, as well as all cravings for the pleasures of the senses which are valued so much in the world, to devote their whole lives for the service of the Lord and realisation of the truth, will certainly increase men's faith in the efficacy of spiritual life, and also intensify their pursuit after the same. Moreover, if monks take to active social service as a means to their spiritual upliftment, as they have often done in the past and are still doing at present, it will result also in material gain to society. Thus

the ideal of renunciation which provides society with the most efficient means for the spread of genuine spiritual culture, and that at the minimum cost, cannot be considered as fostering parasitism.

Another objection, of an entirely different nature, to the ideal of renunciation is that it is incompatible with the due recognition of woman's dignity and rights in society. It is pointed out that monks being celibates and of an ascetic temperament have always considered women as the greatest impediments to man's spiritual progress, and have depicted them as vile and detestable creatures. There is, however, some historical and psychological foundation for this charge. If we examine the circumstances under which monasticism first arose either in the East or the West, we will see that they were times of great social degeneracy. In India the pre-Buddhist days, when monasticism first arose as a regular institution, witnessed a great downfall in the spiritual ideals of the nation. Enjoyment of sensual pleasures captivated the minds of people so entirely that religion was reduced to a system of rituals for the attainment of the same. In the West the period known to the historian as the Dark Ages was notorious for the license and brutality in which the laity indulged. It was as a protest against these extreme forms of worldliness and sensualism that monasticism first arose. Bands of thoughtful men who were horrified by the degrading influences that surrounded them, cut themselves aloof from society, considering that worldly life was an evil in itself, and that woman who was chiefly responsible for binding man to it was the very instrument of Satan. Looking from the psychological standpoint also we find that when the spirit of renunciation first dawns on men, he thinks that it is the objects of the senses that attract him to the world. The feeling of sex is so great in him that the proximity of woman rouses up lust in his mind, and he thinks that woman who is responsible for it must be a vile creature. But as his vision grows subjective, he learns that it is not woman or anything external that is chiefly attracting him, but it is the intensity of his desires that drags him to the slavery of the senses. This experience has already altered the wrong impression that early monks had about womankind. It is more and more recognised that depreciation of woman's character is not what helps one to conquer her influence. A man who has renounced the world must of course avoid her company; but what is required more of him is to transform his outlook on her. In place of viewing her with sexually contaminated eyes, he must look upon her as a symbol and manifestation of the Divine Mother. By this he can not only root out all feelings of lust in him, but also improve the position and dignity of womanhood in society.

What we have considered till now are objections generally raised against monastic life as a whole. But the opponents of the ideal of renunciation are, however, specially severe against those who have given up the world from their very youth without passing through the householder's life. Concerning them it is said that even if renunciation be accepted as a true ideal, they are not fit for it, as they have not discharged their duty to society by leaving any issue behind, and also because they have not had a full experience of life! Some people even fear that a wide-spread prevalence of this ideal will lead to the destruction of human society and as such they accuse its followers as working against the purpose of the Creator!

But if we examine these arguments closely we will realise that they are the outcomes of either prejudice or fears without any foundation. What is regarded as negligence on their part in the discharge of their duty to society, is the outcome of their devotion to a greater duty,—the duty towards God. In their opinion the propagation of the species is not the highest duty of man towards God or society, nor is the life-long celibacy of a few individuals likely to upset the plans of the Creator. He is resourceful enough to see that His schemes are not frustrated by the efforts of man. Man's supreme duty towards God consists in offering his whole being unreservedly at His feet, even before he is contaminated by the influence of this world. A man who is sincere and earnest in his spiritual life must devote the best part of his life to God, and not its declining period when the fire of his youth has subsided. Such a man whose only concern in life has been his God and whose only wealth his spiritual illumination, is able to do to society the greatest service that any individual can possibly do for it. His noble example inspires many men with the sublimity of the spiritual ideal, and if he does not leave any children of his body behind, he can confer on society the services of many men whose lives have been moulded after his example. This is surely a much higher sort of social service than the mere upbringing of children, good, bad or indifferent. They are further accused of not having had the full experience of life, and of not having made use of all the faculties that God has endowed them with. As regards the first point, is it not a pertinent question to ask those apostles of worldly life whether a life of absolute renunciation without any taint of the sex life is not also an experience of life, and whether their own lives which they are so particular about idealising are complete without the same? Moreover, if it be held that an experience of the other aspects of life is absolutely necessary to have genuine renunciation, cannot the attitude of those in whom this feeling is roused up without passing through them be explicable in the light of the theory of reincarnation? As regards the

second point, it has to be remarked that all the God-given faculties of man have two aspects, a higher one and a lower one. The feeling of love which is the point here in question, appears as lust in its gross aspect, and as divine love in its most sublime aspect. Is not the latter manifest in the life of a man of renunciation, and as such can he be accused of having strangled the feelings of his heart?

In fact what lies at the root of all these wrong notions about the ideal of renunciation is the misconception that religion and God are to occupy only the last period of a man's life, and it is this very same misconceived idea that monasticism seeks to combat. An old and decrepit body that has been corrupted by long association with the gross objects of sensual enjoyments, and a mind still more vitiated by filthy thoughts, and torn asunder by a hundred passions—are these the instruments with which a man is to achieve the stupendous task of self-realisation which the scriptures have described as hard as traversing along the sharp edge of a razor? Are these again the objects that a person is to dedicate at the feet of the Lord? Anyone who is really earnest about spiritual life will not agree with this view. There is of course the conception of renunciation as the crown of a well-spent life. There is nothing objectionable in this. But where are the people in whose lives this ideal is exemplified? How many even among those who are supposed to have spent their lives usefully manifest the mental strength necessary to give up all that they have earned and all that they have held as dear and near to them in the course of their long lives? There is nothing to be said against those who are able to achieve this difficult task. But renunciation from early life must be considered a higher ideal, as it enables a person to keep himself absolutely away from worldly contamination, while giving him ample opportunities for self-less work in an attitude of service for the Lord until he attains that spirit of non-attachment and fervent dispassion without which self-realisation is an impossibility. Having attained these, he must lose himself in an unceasing effort after God-realisation, and after reaching the consummation of this great purpose, he may, if it be the will of the Lord, participate in the ordinary life of mankind for the welfare of the world at large. It is the service of such a one, only who sees the image of his Lord in all beings that is really worth the name, and is of enduring value to mankind.

THE CONCEPT OF RELATION

By Prof. H. K. Raja Rao, M. A.

The sages and seers whose sole yearning is to seek the Truth have all to face the rocky concepts of Metaphysics, the concepts that puzzle the mind as to their place and function in the Science of sciences. The concept of Relation is no exception to the rule, and philosophers have fought hard to find its place and function. The importance of this concept is enhanced by the subtlety of thought itself, for, thought implies relation—relation between the subject and the object, the that and the what. Still more prominent does this problem of Relation become, when one sees that even the primary concept of Substance—not to speak of the concept of Quality—has to depend upon the concept of Relation.

It is no wonder, then, that critics muster all their rigour when the idealist frankly pronounces that even such a mighty concept is but an appearance of Reality. The critic naturally persists in asking how the concept of Relation is necessarily a sign of appearance. The idealist has one answer to give, and he does not shift his position,—that is, that abstractions involve self-contradiction becoming thus self-destructive. The concept of Relation is to the idealist an abstraction from the world of the whole and hence an appearance only. The relational way of thought is to be found when there are two or more terms *related* to one another and certainly relation cannot create terms; nor can terms create relation. Herein consists the famous paradox of the idealist that Relation presupposes the related and the related pre-supposes Relation—that the one cannot be found without the other, even like the bright blossom without its perfume.

In asserting the appearance of Relation, the idealist does not commit the blunders which the persistent realists and the frantic scientists are forced to commit. He does not posit a world of independent chaotic reals, driving away, as Herbart did, all relations from such a Pandemonium. Nor does he reduce the world into mere relation, sinking down the individuality of the terms related. He is equally sensitive to the Naiyayika who posits the reality of the notorious *samavaya* relation. Above all, the idealist holds it a monstrosity when the realist offers his curious suggestion of external relation. The idealist on the other hand posits an organic, systematic whole that is composed of organically and systematically related parts a whole that is free from self-contradiction, that is made up of parts

which contribute to the whole. In such a scheme, a part when abstracted and considered as a whole becomes an appearance.

Herein consists a grave danger to which the commonsense school is a victim. It supposes that appearance is opposed to Reality, always refusing to understand the idealist's repeated words that the one is *not* opposed to the other. In fact, Reality "*lives*" in its appearances. But appearance alone cannot be Reality, nor can a sum of appearances be Reality. Relation, to come back, is an appearance in so far as it is a mere abstraction from the whole, in so far as it is itself considered as the whole. But Relation is not appearance in the sense that it is opposed to Reality, for the idealist is alive to the practical value of the concept of Relation.

The ingenious dilemma that either the Absolute's sway must be accepted or relation itself must be dismissed as illusion, has to share an unfortunate fallacy of ignoring the idealist's statements. The theory builds a structure of turbulent parts over rebelling against the whole, but never defeating that whole; but the idealist is no victim to such a romance. He finds harmony and self-consistency in the parts that are related to the whole, in fact, that form the whole.

Then arises the question, Is this whole free from relations? How far can the Absolute be said to be free from relations? The Absolute, as has already been noted, is the systematic, self-consistent whole and stress is to be laid, if it is to be laid at all, equally on the whole and the parts. A concentrated attention on the aspect of unity implies a negligence of the various elements that unite and a blind devotion to the variety and multiplicity of parts suggests an indifference to the whole as mere fiction, a working of the mind. But truth consists in a strict view of the whole of facts, in an impartial enquiry into the complete concrete experience. Then is the Absolute free from all relations in so far as the stress is laid equally on both the Absolute and its parts.

If the relational stage is thus an appearance, a mere incomplete development of the Absolute, it follows that the Absolute is beyond relations. The Absolute is free, not in the sense that it has nothing to do with relations, but in the sense that it supersedes relations and thus includes them. The Absolute is Relation and is more than Relation. This supra-relational aspect of the Absolute is no convenient fiction of any imaginative brain, but a confirmed fact of experience. Every day experience of a simple feeling of forgetting distinction and relation in the vision of an enchanting landscape or a peaceful sunset, proves the unity of the that and the what. Here neither is negated,

but the one is transcended. Similar experience is to be found in the mystic who dances in ecstasy forgetting himself. True, a translation of such an experience into the language of intellect involves a variety, but that experience which is the crowning glory of intellectual achievement itself, goes beyond variety and distinction. It is this beatific intuition where all is bliss that one finds no longer any relation or quality, but always the supreme joy of the One.

RECONCILIATION OF THE RACES AND RELIGIONS IN INDIA *

(Continued from the February Issue)

By Swami Ghanananda

The fundamental unity of India and Indian nationalism :—Turn we now from the reconciliation of religions to the reconciliation of the different communities.

In geographical, political, cultural and other aspects, India possesses a distinct fundamental unity behind its apparent diversity of castes and creeds, customs and manners. Shut out from the rest of Asia by the Himalayas in the north and bounded by the sea on its three sides, India is naturally the area of a single people. This unity has shown itself in empires in the past like those of Chandragupta and Asoka. The varied productions interchangeable with one another, and the long rivers affording facilities for transport and communication, make India a single industrial unit. Nor is she lacking in cultural unity. The great Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, are national and universal classics. The Ganges is the sacred river of all India. Her pilgrims wander to her shrines, from all her corners. To the Mohammedans she is the land trodden by the foot of their saints and the diadem that adorned the crown of the great Mohammedan emperors. Prof. Radhakumud Mukherjee aptly mentions that Bharatavarsha is held up as a convenient symbol of unity. In the words of Sir Ramsay MacDonald: "This sense of unity in the heart of the people of India is a far greater binding force than the separatist force of the differences in social status, caste and religion."

In bringing about a reconciliation between India's racial elements, what we have to do is to emphasise and intensify the fundamental unity of India in order to create a common national impulse, a fiery

* Read at the Sixth All-India and Burma Bahai Convention held at Calcutta on the 6th December, 1928.

patriotism, a united effort and aspiration on the part of the Indian people to weld themselves together and create a great wave of national resurgence, which will engulf all petty communal differences and distinction. Critics of India hold that such a reconciliation is impossible in our country which presents a baffling diversity in many respects. But the history of countries like Russia, Canada and the United States of America, which have as many diversifying features as India, if not more, proves that a racial or communal reconciliation is possible through nationalism.

The Indian national spirit can be fostered by bringing about a great religious revival, by imparting a national system of education, by awakening the masses through spiritual and social equality, and by inculcating civic and national duties into the mind of every Indian.

Religion.—*Firstly*, as the past history of India shows that a national resurgence followed great religious revivals, we should bring about a great spiritual upheaval. Religion has all along contributed to the unity of the people of India. It has also conserved the energy of the entire nation by directing it towards a higher moral and spiritual ideal. And in a few generations after a religious revival, when the spiritual tension would naturally slacken, the conserved energy of the people would manifest itself in rich national vitality and a glorious renaissance in arts, literature and other forms of activities. This was how an Asokan empire came in the wake of Buddhism; united races and powerful kingdoms in the South in the wake of the spiritual movements of Sankara and Ramanuja; the Maharatta empire in the West in the wake of the Renaissance that had its stimulating force in Tukaram and Ramdas; and the Sikh power in the wake of Nanak and the Sikh Gurus. Can we not expect a similar outburst of national life in the wake of the union of hearts resulting from the harmony of religion? True religion which transcends all churches and creeds will serve as the greatest reconciling force in India as well as the whole world.

Education.—*Secondly*, as education greatly helps in organising the different communities of a country into a single nation, all efforts should be made to impart a national system of education to our boys and young men through schools and colleges and to the elders in the cities and the villages through newspapers and magazines, moving libraries and other means. Such an education will reveal to all Indians—be they Hindu, Moslem or any other—the common traditions, the common historical background and the common national point of view, which are all essential for a united India.

Take, for example, the teaching of Indian History. It should be so taught as to intensify the national consciousness of the entire people—

The one impression that it leaves, as it is taught today, is that India has failed. But is it true that India has failed? How then has she been living on for several thousands of years, of which nearly ten centuries were a long period of political subjection? How can we explain her wonderful and death-defying vitality? What was the part played in Indian history by Hindu, Buddhistic, Dravidian and Islamic cultures and civilizations? What again has been the part played by the socio-religious polity of India and her village community in maintaining the security of her national life?

History as it is taught to-day also portrays the different Indian communities in a biased manner. Interested historians have exaggerated the discordant features of our national history and this has gone to embitter the already existing feeling of communalism. In Sir P. C. Ray's words, "It was the policy of the English historian to paint the Hindus and Moslems dark.....Near the palace of Tippu there was the temple of a Hindu God. A Mohammedan prince who allowed a temple near his palace could not have been a persecutor.....At Dacca there was a temple built in the time of Jehangir, and within a stone's throw of that was a Musjid.....Are not the Hindus proud of the Taj-mahal equally with the Mohammedans of India?" It was Swami Vivekananda that observed that Shahjehan would have turned in his grave to hear himself called a 'foreigner'. What depth of love and poignancy of feeling! Can this be engendered by a reading of our history as it has been written! Why is Sivaji considered by the early historians as a robber-chief and by some of the later historians as an empire-builder and administrator? Not only history but all other subjects should be taught from the truly national point of view. In such work of constructive education, it is no mean part that the teacher at school, the priest at the village and the parent at home will have to play.

Just as comparative religion is revealing many points of striking affinity between different faiths, a comparative study of our cultures and civilizations will draw us closer together. The Aryan, Dravidian and Semitic cultures and civilizations, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture and music should be studied side by side, and the results of the investigation made available for one and all.

Great stress should be placed on the vernacularisation of studies in schools and colleges and organised attempts made to disseminate religion and philosophy, science and literature, and especially the researches of our modern Indian scholars in the various branches of thought through translations from the original in Sanskrit, English or other languages, as the case may be. As we are sadly lacking in a

knowledge of the various kinds of literature of the different provinces of our own country, we should bring it within the reach of every Indian. We should try also as far as possible to have a common language for India. Endeavours should also be made to remove the illiteracy of the masses, as otherwise they would be cut off from the educated classes, who form the rest of the country.

Spiritual and social equality :— *Thirdly*, as the greatest weakness of India to-day is her toleration of privilege which has cast a dark shadow over the land, we must give complete social and spiritual equality to all the children of our motherland. Spiritual equality must first be restored as it will prepare the way for the abolition of social privileges and also for the spread of culture. Sri Krishna, Buddha, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir and a host of other teachers, prophets and reformers arose in the past to democratise the religious culture of Hinduism, Islam and others religions. The same work has to be done to-day for bringing about a religious awakening which in turn will usher in a national renaissance. In this endeavour care should be taken not to destroy castes and communities but elevate the lower to the position of the higher. The general cultural level of the masses is to be raised. This attempt may be beset with obstacles in the Hindu fold with its crystallised form of caste, but in the Islamic world it will be far easier on account of its great democratic spirit. Unless this is done, the masses who form the backbone of the country cannot move nor can the power which lies dormant in them be released to energise and vitalise the nation. The secret of the solution of the problem of untouchability lies in raising the cultural level of the so-called untouchables, and the sure way of ending the conflicts between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins is by the latter's appropriation of the culture of the former.

Besides giving vocational training in agriculture and industries which will enable the people to stand the competition in the economic sphere, we should also give to education a modern outlook, as it is helpful to the growth of co-operation and co-ordination which precedes all groupings and organisations. The Indian proletariat should know something of India's position in the world in economics, commerce and industry. It should know also about the growth of nationalism in countries like Ireland, Russia, China, England, France and America. In one word, it should acquire "a world sense" in its general primary education.

Such an awakening of the masses will be created by an alliance of the spiritual idealism of Vedanta and the practicality and democratic

spirit of Islam. By it will be gathered up all the scattered nationalising and unifying forces in our country. In the words of Sister Nivedita, "Hinduism alone in its completeness can never create a nationality, for it then tends to be dominated by the exclusiveness of the Brahmin caste, whose ideal is naturally and rightfully its central type. Learning and austerity are the characteristic virtues of that ideal. Exclusiveness is its characteristic weakness and vice. It is only, therefore, when there is within Hinduism itself a counter-centre to the Brahmin that Hinduism can suffice to create a nationality. This counter-centre was found during the Asokan period in the personality of Buddha, who was a Kshatriya by birth."

"After the advent of Mohammedanism, even this could no longer be sufficient, so that Akbar and Shahjehan combining the ethos of Hindu culture with Islamic idea of the Brotherhood of Man became the representative figures of the new conceptions of nationality." Swami Vivekananda meant the same thing when he once wrote to a Mohammedan admirer, "For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam, Vedanta brain and Islam body, is the only hope". The unity which the Swami speaks is to be based not merely on the material concerns of life but also on the spiritual synthesis of Vedanta and Islam.

Civic and national life ;—Fourthly, we must inculcate civic and national duties into the minds of every man and every woman. The elements of nationality being civic, every Indian, be he Hindu, Moslem, Christian, or any other, must be imbued with a profound sense of civic and national idealism which will transcend all considerations of castes and religions. Hindus, Moslems and all are on one footing in this relationship to the commune and the nation. The civic and national spirit requires the expansion of consciousness from the family to wider and more complex groups. India being a country mainly of village in which 90 per cent of its population live, in the rural reconstruction that will have to precede all national growth and development, great emphasis must be laid on the civic duties and national responsibilities as the Dharma of every villager, whatever be his caste or creed.

*The era of conciliation and consolidation;—*There are undoubtedly many signs of the reconciliation and unification of the different sections of the Indian people like the Bengali, Punjabi, Mahratti, Canaries, Tamilian, Telegu, Malabari and others. There was an age when Hindus, Moslems and Christians were all radically divergent in religion, daily life, social views and political outlook. To-day a fresh modern type is emerging to which each of these groups approximates.

In literary appreciation, artistic enjoyment, political aspiration and national ambition, the different communal, sectarian and social peculiarities tend to disappear. All are marching to a new era of conciliation and consolidation.

*The work before us :—*To-day India is in the throes of a new birth. In order to hasten her evolution, we have first to accomplish the task of reconciliation of the various communities on lines indicated above. Purely political activities touch but a fringe of our national life. All bodies and institutions, political or otherwise, that have the welfare of India at heart, should contribute their quota for the fulfilment of this task in a spirit of self-sacrificing service.

Swami Vivekananda wanted to carry out two main objects. These were, firstly, to preach the Universal Religion which proclaims that every man is potentially divine and must realise his divinity by suitable spiritual disciplines; and secondly, to look upon all men, women and children, irrespective of caste, colour, creed or sex, as veritable manifestations of the Divine and *serve* them by removing their wants and sufferings, physical, mental, moral and spiritual. With this end in view, the Swami established the Ramkrishna Mission, which bears the name of his Master who preached the harmony of religions and the divinity and solidarity of mankind. "The national ideals of India," said the Swami, "are renunciation and service. Intensify her in these channels and the rest will take care of itself." Is this not applicable to the whole world? What can we achieve without renouncing our little self and without working with a purified heart?

In fine, we will do well to bear in mind that it won't do if we merely speak in terms of internationalism and universality, but think in terms of nationalism or communalism and act in terms of our own narrow and selfish individuality.

If, in our spiritual life, we remember that amidst all our diverse religions, there is only one goal—

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far off divine event
To which the whole creation moves"—

and if, in our endeavours, we remember the message of the ancient Vedic Rishi—

"Common be your desires, united be your hearts,
united be your intention, so that there be
a thorough union among you,"—

then the reconciliation of races and religions not only in India, but in the whole world, will sooner or later be accomplished.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT MADRAS.

The Sixty-seventh Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Brodie's Road, Mylapore, Madras, on Sunday, the 3rd. of February last. A life-size picture of the Swami was placed on a platform in the hall amidst floral decorations of taste and grandeur. Several parties sang devotional songs in Marhathi, Hindustani, Tamil and Sanskrit. On the occasion as usual about 3,000 poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed in the spacious grounds of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, and in the Math itself more than 300 devotees partook of the holy Prasadam, besides petty distribution in hand throughout the day. The boys of the R. K. Mission Students' Home and the staff, and the Boy Scouts of the local P. S. High School rendered excellent service specially in connection with the feeding business.

In the afternoon a very nice speech was delivered in Tamil by Sj. N. Subramanya Iyer, B.A., L.T., of the Students' Home on the life and teachings of the Swami. Then followed the English lecture on "The Dynamic Message of Swami Vivekananda," by Dr. Savoor, M.A., D.Sc., Professor, Presidency College, Madras, with Dewan Bahadur Sj. R. Ramachandra Raw, C.I.E., Retired Collector of Madras, in the chair.

In the course of his lecture Dr. Savoor dwelt upon the multiple personality of Swami Vivekananda with special emphasis on the universality of his teachings. He pointed out in the words of the Swami Vivekananda, that scriptures and seers all have recognised in one voice the divinity of the human nature, and that religion and education are but the accessories to the revelation of the ultimate truth of the human existence. The realisation of the oneness of humanity—the cardinal teaching of the Vedanta—eliminates the invidious distinction that we generally notice in different walks of our life—between the high and the low, the Brahmin and the Pariah, the touchables and the untouchables and so on. Swamiji's ideal of service is grounded upon the fundamental truth of this Vedantic conception of the oneness of life which has imparted a new orientation to the ideal of service in this new age; for service, viewed in this light, is nothing short of the highest form of worship. Swamiji's life is an eloquent illustration of this sacred idealism of service. The learned speaker concluded by saying that real democracy and brotherhood can be established when we shall

have such a synthetic vision of life and look upon every human being as the manifestation of the divinity. The Chairman in a nice little speech paid his loving tributes to the sacred memory of the Swami, and said that in view of the complexity of human life and thousand and one demands of worldly duties on the capacity of man, it may not be always possible for him to live up to the highest ideal all at once, but the daily performance of at least one act of selflessness would morally elevate the man and would ultimately qualify him for the realisation of the highest truth of human destiny. After the termination of the meeting with the usual thanks-giving the audience were entertained with the sweet inspiring music, both vocal and instrumental, of S. Krishnaswami Iyer, Advocate, and his worthy friends.

The *Tithipuja* of the Swami was also observed as usual in the Math on the 1st of February.

AT OTHER PLACES

The blessed memory was also celebrated in a grand scale at the Ramakrishna Mission Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya, Vannarponnai, Jaffna, Ceylon. The entrance to the Vidyalaya as well as the hall were tastefully decorated and they presented a picturesque appearance. On the dais that looked like a sacred forest in miniature was installed the picture of Swami Vivekananda. The proceeding for the day began with Bhajanam in the morning followed by a special Puja. Then a public meeting was held, presided over by Swami Vipulananda. In a short speech the President explained the significance of the day and the immense benefit afforded to the Hindus throughout the world by the advent of Swami Vivekananda.

In the afternoon a display of music both instrumental and vocal, by talented musicians was gone through. Six boys from the Students' Home of the Mission at Vannarponnai performed "Kolattam". Then came the most important item of the day,—a lecture in Tamil on "Swami Vivekananda and His Message" by Mr. Natesan, B.A., B.L., Principal, Parameswara College, Tinnovely. During the one hour of the lecture the whole audience, which was composed of students, ladies and gentlemen, was kept in rapt attention as the subject was a very impressive one. Special songs composed for the occasion were then sung. Mr. S. Sinnadurai then delivered in Tamil an interesting lecture on the "New Awakening through Swami Vivekananda." "Valthu" songs (songs of blessings) and Thevaram brought the day's proceedings to a close at about 8.30 p.m.

The Sri Ramakrishna Math, Gariston-Burn Bastion Road, Delhi, observed the Anniversary at the local Narain Dharmasala. A big-size portrait of the great Swami was decorated with flowers and bouquets. In a public meeting, presided over by S. M. K. Acharya, M.L.A., three lectures were delivered in Urdu by Lala Uttamchand, Asst. Head Master, D. A. V. School, Delhi, Mrs. Veda and Pandit Muralidhar of the Theosophical Society. Lastly, Swami Sharvananda spoke to the audience in English, and in a neat little speech he placed before them some important characteristics of the Swamiji's ideals.

The Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Sevashrama of Muzaffarpur, U. P., also observed the sacred Day under the presidency of the Local Commissioner. About 600 poor-Narayanas were fed.

In connection with the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda we have received invitations from the following organisations:—

Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Headquarters, Belur, Howrah ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Chandipur, Midnapur ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dinajpur ; The Vivekananda Pratisthana, Bankura ; Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Dacca, in the Bengal Presidency ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore ; Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah ; Sri Ramakrishna Yogananda Ashrama, Alleppey, Coorg, in the Madras Presidency ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay ; Ramakrishna Ashrama, Civil Station, Rajkot, Kathiawar ; Swami Vivekananda Club, Kolhapur, Satara, in the Bombay Presidency ; The Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon ; Sree Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bankipur ; The Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur, in Behar ; The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Luxa, Benares City ; The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar ; The Publicat Almora, in the United Provinces.

Everywhere feeding of the poor-Narayanas forms an important part of the celebration, besides lectures and discourses on the life and teachings of the Swami.

R. K. MISSION RELIEF-OPERATION FROM 1922 TO 1927

The Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission places before the public a Report on the various works done by it in different places of Bengal, Madras, Assam, Behar and Orissa from the month of July 1922 to December 1927. In 1922 flood-relief work was carried on from 15 centres in the districts of Rajshahi, Midnapore, Faridpur, Hooghly and Bankura on an extensive scale. The Mission further undertook the Gangasagar Mela relief-work in January 1923. The total receipts on the above accounts from different sources including

the R. K. Mission Provident Relief Fund, amounted to Rs. 25,462-4-3 and the expenditure to Rs. 15,199-14-9, the balance being Rs. 10,262-5-6 deposited in the P. R. F. of the Mission after the completion of the work. Since 1925 the Mission ceased to send its relief party to Gangsagar Mela and the total expenditure during the years 1923-1925 for this Mela-relief work came up to Rs. 1,812-7-0 in cash. In August, 1923 owing to heavy showers the river Sone rose in high flood and created a havoc over an extensive area of 250 sq. miles. The Mission's relief party started five centres in the most affected parts of the devastated area. The total receipts and expenditures were Rs. 6,885-3-0 and Rs. 5048-4-3 respectively and the balance was kept deposited in the R. K. Mission Provident Relief Fund. Besides, the Mission undertook various other relief operations according as the situations demanded. A brief outline of these multifarious works is given below for general information:—

(a) Fire-relief:—(i) In the districts of Manbhum and 24 Perganas in 1923; (ii) in Kamrup, Bankura and 24 Perganas in 1924; (iii) Panchguda near Bhubaneswar in 1926; (iv) Andharua near Bhubaneswar in 1927; (v) Parbatipur in 24 Perganas in 1927. The total expenditures:—(i) Rs. 618-14-0; (ii) Rs. 2575-13-3; (iii) Rs. 410-; (iv) Rs. 355-2-3; (v) Rs. 323 -respectively.

(b) Plague-relief:—In Lahore and Rohatak in 1923. The total expenditure met from the R. K. Mission P. F.:—Rs. 987-9-0.

(c) Cyclone and tornado-relief:—(i) Eastern part of Ganjam in 1923-1924; (ii) Madaripur Sub-Division (Faridpur) in 1926. The expenditures:—Rs. 3096-14-9; (ii) Rs. 1312-14-6 respectively.

(d) Flood-relief:—(i) In the District of Bhagalpur in 1924; (ii) in the United Provinces of Oudh and Agra in connection with the Ganges and the Jumna floods in 1924; (iii) in Balasore (Orissa) in 1927. The expenditures:—(i) Rs. 4685-3-0; (ii) Rs. 2883-10-6; (iii) Rs. 10173-0-9 respectively.

(e) Cholera-relief:—(i) Jayanti (Jalpaiguri) in 1924; (ii) Garbetta (Midnapore), Batanal (Hooghly), Araria (Purneah) in 1925. The expenditure:—(i) Rs. 88-12-0; (ii) The epidemic subsided after a prolonged attempt of the workers for a month and a half in Araria and for a month in Garbetta and Batanal. Araria Local Board bore the entire cost of relief-work within its jurisdiction.

(f) Small-Pox and Malaria-relief:—(i) Jayrambaty (Bankura) in 1925; (ii) in the districts of Maldah and Purneah in 1926. Expenditure:—(i) Rs. 50/-; (ii) The District Board of Purneah bore the

entire cost of relief work conducted by the Mission within its jurisdiction.

(g) Famine-relief:—(i) 33 villages near Jantara (Santal Perganas) and 45 villages near Paikmajeta (Midnapore) received help in kind in 1926.

Thus from a brief review of the extensive relief-works of the R. K. Mission from 1922 to 1927, the public would be able to realise the importance and usefulness of such a philanthropic institution in the country. The Report contains a detailed audited account of the receipts and expenditures of the different relief-centres as well as a list of the names of the places that received substantial help from the Mission in cash and kind during the years under review. The Secretary of the Mission conveys its hearty thanks to the generous donors and subscribers to the Relief Fund, but for whose continued co-operation and unstinted support the Mission would have found it impossible to render any service to the suffering people.

R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

The Seventh Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama (Charitable Dispensary), Rangoon, for the year 1927 is to our hand. In the year under review the Corporation of Rangoon made some additions in the Hospital buildings at a cost of about Rs. 6,000/- and kindly granted a sum of Rs. 21,000/- for the accommodation of women and children as in-patients for treatment. During the year the total attendance of patients at the Sevashrama was 1,13,507; this exceeded the total of the previous year by 10,000. The number of the in-door patients was 1,616, the number at the out-patients' department came up to 91,631 and the aggregate of the daily totals of attendance was 21,876. The activities of the Sevashrama extended also to spreading among the people the elementary principles of sanitation and hygiene by instilling into their minds the beneficial effects of prevention rather than the cure of diseases. It is purely a charitable institution and depends for its growth and expansion upon the beneficence of the public. Help and co-operation in any shape will always be gratefully accepted and acknowledged.

R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA, BRINDABAN

The Twenty-first Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, for 1927 gives a satisfactory account of its philanthropic activities. The total number of patients treated during the year in the In-door Hospital of the Sevashrama was 269; of these 222 were cured and discharged, 34 died, 5 left treatment and 8 remained under treatment at the end of the year. Altogether 27,996 patient

were treated in the Out-door Dispensary, of whom 8,410 were new and 19,586 were repeated cases. 12 disabled persons were treated and nursed at their own quarters and 4 helpless pardanashin ladies were helped with Rs. 2/-per month.

The crying needs of the Serashrama are noted below :—

(1) An Out-door Dispensary building with necessary outfits. (2) An additional general ward for male indoor-patients. (3) A cholera ward. (4) A guest-house. (5) A protecting wall for the Sevashrama on the Jumna side, and a bathing ghat.

The importance of this institution can hardly be over-estimated. It needs adequate financial support, and any donation or contribution will be most thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA NATIONAL GIRLS' SCHOOL, GEORGE TOWN,
MADRAS

The Report of the Sri Ramakrishna National Girls' School, George Town, Madras, on the working of the institution for 1926-28 is to our hand. During the years under review there were 108 admissions and 149 withdrawals. The average monthly strength ranged between 160 and 140. The teaching staff consisted of 6 teachers, 2 of whom were Christians and the rest Hindus. Most of the teachers were trained. Besides, an elderly gentleman who is a graduate of the Madras University and intimately connected with the Mission for over 25 years, worked during the period as a religious instructor. But owing to inadequate funds, the management had to incur a liability to the extent of Rs. 947-1-5 during the years under review. Under the circumstances it has been found necessary to provide a capital of Rs. 2000/-at the beginning of each year to meet the monthly recurring expenditure of about Rs. 260/-and various other contingencies. Moreover, the school is located in a rented building which is not commodious and fit for school purposes. It must have a building of its own. The importance of such an educational institution run on national lines can hardly be exaggerated. The management confidently hope that the public interested in female education would come forward with necessary financial support to place the school on a sound footing. We believe the appeal would be generously responded to. Contributions may be sent to the President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, RAJKOT

The Report of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar, for the year beginning in March, 1927 and ending in February, 1928, gives a detailed account of its growth and gradual expansion. Within the short span of one year of its existence the Ashrama has proved its

usefulness by its silent activities. Regular discourses on Vedanta Philosophy and religion were held, thrice a week in the Ashrama, and a series of class talks were given to the upper standard students of the Saurashtra and the Alfred High Schools. Occasional public lectures were also organised, and Bhojan was made an important item of its activities to stimulate the spiritual aspirations of the devotees. The newly started library, containing a small number of books and periodicals, was of great use to the public. During the year the Ashrama, according to its small means, helped two poor, deserving students of the local High Schools with money. The Ashrama celebrated the birthday anniversaries of almost all the great saviours of the world, and usual lectures and discourses formed the special feature of these occasions. Lastly, in co-operation with the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, the Ashrama conducted splendid relief-work for over five months in Bombay, Baroda and British territories affected by the last disastrous flood. The want of a well-equipped library, an ideal Students' Home and an outdoor Dispensary is now being keenly felt and an adequate fund is also needed for the maintenance of the workers of the Ashrama. The importance of such a philanthropic institution can hardly be over-estimated. The Secretary, while offering sincere thanks to all subscribers, donors, friends, sympathisers and well-wishers of the Ashrama, earnestly appeals to the large-hearted public to come forward with a substantial financial support so as to place it on a sound and stable foundation, and we hope the appeal shall not go in vain.

CITY STUDENTS' CLUB, MADRAS

We have received a copy of the Report on the working and progress of the City Students' Club for the year 1927-28 for review. The Club has its object, the mental, moral and physical development of its members, the fostering of the spirit of brotherhood and the cultivation of the histrionic talents. The process of culture is promoted by means of literary meetings, parliamentary debates, socials, dramatic entertainments, etc., and the number of such sittings came up to 48 during the year under consideration. The Club had 45 members on its roll, consisting of students from the various colleges in the city, besides a few officials. The financial position of the Club is not satisfactory. In view of its cosmopolitan spirit and catholic outlook as well as of its good services, the institution should be substantially supported by the influential men of the city so to ensure it a useful career for time to come.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME, BANGALORE CITY

The Ninth Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Bangalore City, for 1927-28 is to hand. There were altogether 15 students in the Home. Of the three final year students, two qualified themselves for the degree with a second class in the optional subjects and the other passed only in one part. The other students in the college classes were all promoted except two of the first year students. Notwithstanding a few debating classes held during the year, we cannot but allude to the fact that any suitable provision for the religious and moral training of the students and the teaching of the dignity of labour is indeed conspicuous by its absence in the Report. We hope the authorities of the Home would do well to open facilities in the Home for supplementing the students' college education by a regular course of practical and religious training as is done in similar institutions elsewhere and thereby raise the Home from its present position of a mess or a hostel to the dignified status of a Ramakrishna Students' Home. The Home, as the Report shows, stands in need of financial assistance and we hope the public would respond to the appeal for help.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Bhagavad Gita : An Exposition, by Vasant G. Rele, F.C.P.S., L.M. & S. Published by D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Kitab Mahal, Bombay.

Mr. Vasant G. Rele gives in this book a new interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita, based on the science of Psycho-analysis. His theory is that the Gita was revealed to Arjuna to remove a peculiar mental disease he was suffering from on the eve of the great battle. This mental derangement was brought about in Arjuna by a break or disturbance in the harmony between the conscious and sub-conscious aspects of his mind. This disharmony in itself was the result of not having liberated the vast mental energy resulting from the constant suppression of impulses coming from without. To prove these points the author enters into a critical investigation of Arjuna's previous history and of his mental state on the battlefield. He also expounds the psychic organism of the human being, as indicated in the Gita, and proceeds to show how Sri Krishna, the master psychologist that he was, tries to cure Arjuna of his mental disease by a regulated course of advice and suggestions. He gives summaries of the various chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, arranging them in a different order and interpreting them in a new light. Many obscure passages, hitherto interpreted in a theological or allegorical sense, are more rationally expounded in consonance with modern science and psychology. The most striking of these is his interpretation of the Aswattha tree which he explains, not as an allegorical tree, but as the inside apparatus which we call the nervous system of the human body. The book departs in many respects from traditional interpretations, and whether all students of the Gita may agree or not with the author, he has undoubtedly revealed another aspect of the manifold greatness of the Gita, thus opening a new line of research for the future students of this great scripture.

The Religion of Zarathushtra, by Dr. I. J. S. Tarporevalla, B.A. Ph.D., Bar-at-law. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

The Religion of Zarathushtra is the religion of the Parsis and was given out to the world by Zarathushtra, a prophet of Iran. At one time the whole of the Aryan world was plunged in chaos; wickedness was rampant and oppression of the weak became unbearable and intolerable. The world was looking anxiously for the advent of a prophet and at this opportune moment there was born a third son to one Pourushaspa, a pious and learned man of Iran. This boy was named Spitama after the name of the warrior family to which his father belonged. His mother Dughdhova, the daughter of a nobleman of Iran, was "deeply devoted to religion and to the study of the higher problems of life and was as God-fearing and pious as her husband". Being born of such parents Spitama from his childhood exhibited qualities of greatness and at the age of 15 retired into absolute seclusion from which he emerged in his 30th year and delivered his message of love, peace and service. He was thereafter known as Zarathushtra which name means "He of the Golden Light".

From the mass of traditions and worship of various phenomena of Nature which were personified as gods, Zarathushtra wove out a splendid religion that emphasised the worship of one God, gave a rationalistic exposition of Evil and Good and enjoined Service of Humanity as the indispensable means of attaining communion with God. This religion spread throughout Iran shedding its beneficent lustre on all those that embraced and followed it. In the course of some centuries it degenerated and was crushed ultimately by the religion of Islam which on account of the simplicity of the rites and ceremonies and the supreme importance it attached to brotherhood attracted and appealed to the minds of the masses who were then groaning under the tyranny of priesthood and "autocratic aloofness".

The religion of Zarathushtra had many vicissitudes. The sacred texts of the Zoroastrians were destroyed by Alexander the Great who "in a drunken fit set fire to the palace at Persopolis" where they were preserved. Various attempts were subsequently made to collect them from priests and others who got them by heart and handed them down by memory from generation to generation. After the removal of the domination of Arabs, the real persecution of the Parsis began. They were hunted from place to place by the fanatic Moslems until they took refuge among the hills of Kohistan in the province of Khorasan. Remaining here, they defied the Moslem fanatics for nearly half a century. They were at last forced to flee from that place and finally took refuge in India where the Yadava Prince of Gujarat welcomed them. They ever afterwards have lived there as a peaceful and enterprising community hugging to their bosom what little of religious literature they were able to preserve. We are glad that attempts are being made to restore Zoroastrianism to its pristine purity and we join the author in the hope that the message of Zarathushtra will once more flood the world.

The author has devoted 9 chapters to the exposition of the religion and philosophy of Zarathushtra, of which we would specially recommend to the readers those on "The Path of Asha" and "The Religion of Action" as giving a lucid and succinct description of the cardinal doctrines of the religion of the Parsis. We wish the book a wide circulation.

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